The Magazine for Advanced Comic Book Collectors

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 55
January 1998

FAWCETT COMICS
SUPER-HEROES THAT WOULDN'T DIE!

$4.95 U.S./$6.50 Canada
A GEMSTONE PUBLICATION

DIRECT SALES
7 14899 21116 3
05511

SHAZAM!

Adventures of CAPTAIN MARVEL
A REPUBLIC SERIAL IN 12 CHAPTERS
TOM TYLER · FRANK COGHLAN, JR.
WILLIAM BENEDICT · LOUISE CURRIE

Adventures Of Captain Marvel 3-sheet movie poster, 1941. Title sheet for 12-chapter serial. Linen-backed & restored. The rarest of all superhero 3-sheets! $7,500

Flying Marvels Punch-Outs, 1945 Fawcett Pub./Reed & Associates. Unpunched and complete! "Boys...Girls, They Really Fly!" VFNM $50

Captain Marvel Thrill Book, 1941 - rare! Cover detached & split; solid, clean interior GVG $400

Mighty Midget Comics Promo, 1943. Cardboard counter display holding six "pocket-sized" comic books $1,500

Captain Marvel Notepaper, Fawcett Pub./Hobby Notes. Contains 8 VF sets of the original 18 sheets of paper and envelopes, with box $200

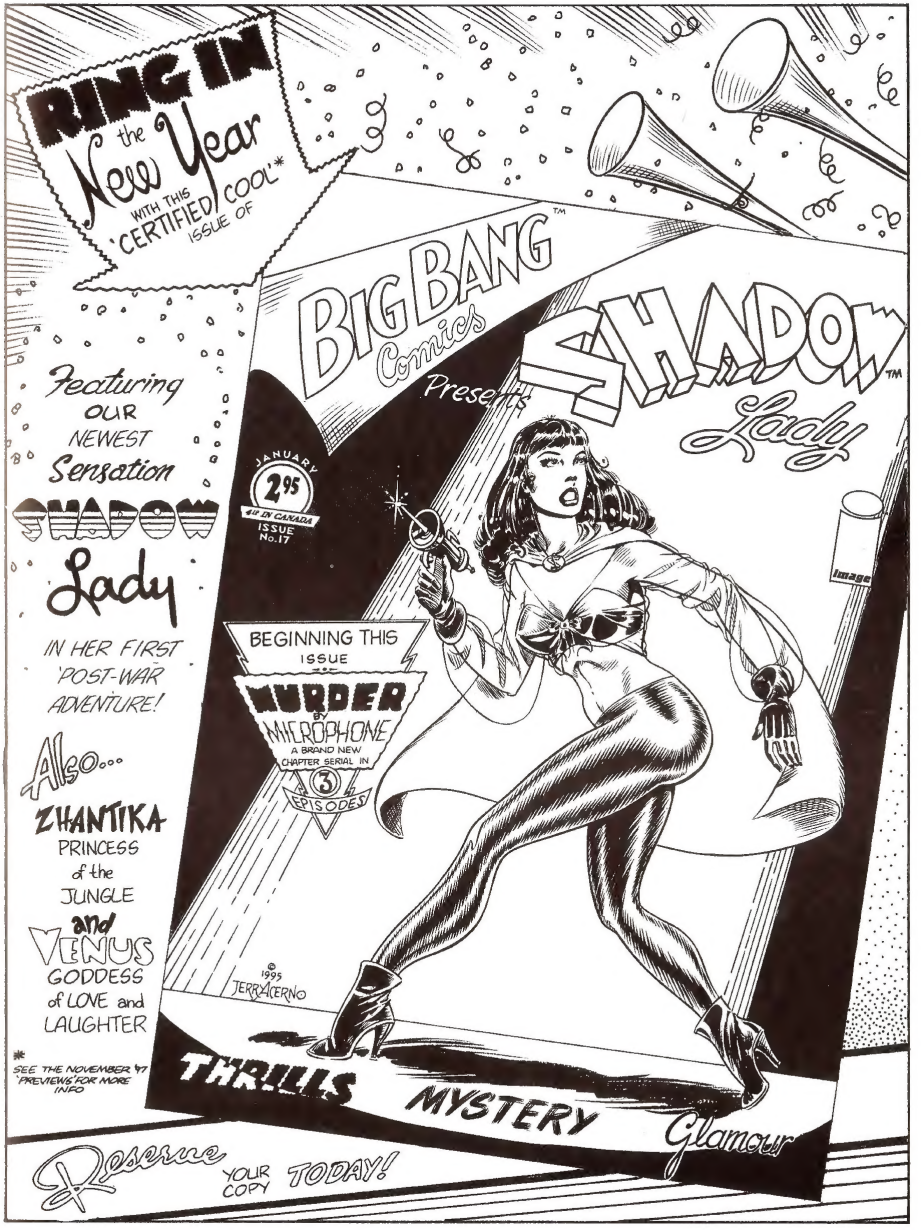
Captain Marvel Pennant. Red, white & blue felt. Slight thumb-tack damage to corners FN $125

Captain Marvel Tie Clip, 1946. Beautiful, NM gold-colored bust of Captain Marvel on color-illustrated, original card $120

DIAMOND
INTERNATIONAL GALLERIES

Captain Marvel Adventures
#10 VG $200
#43 FN $116
#45 VG $70
#51 VGF $63
#52 FN $86
#81 VGF $55
#83 FN $75
#88 FVF $101
#92 FVF $101
Captain Marvel Jr.
#9 G $68
#11 GVG $93
#12 VG $121
#15 G $58
#17 FVF $253
Captain Marvel Story Book
#4 G $43
Captain Midnight
#1 VG $500
#3 GVG $143
#5 VG $186
#22 GVG $61
#31 VGF $73
#34 FN $99
#37 VG $59
#38 GVG $43
#41 VG $48
#42 VG $48
#44 GVG $35
#51 VGF $59
#52 VG $48
#54 VGF $59
#55 VG $48
#57 VGF $59
Gift Comics
#2 FN $563
Ibis The Invincible
#2 G $82
#6 FN $165
Marvel Family
#3 VG $103
#9 VG $73
Master Comics
#1 VG $1474
#11 G $261
#12 VF $983
#17 VGF $259
#18 GVG $162
#19 GVG $162
#23 VF+ $2000
1st solo Capt. Marvel Jr.
#44 VG $85
#46 G $42
#53 VG $43
#77 FN $56
Nickel Comics
#4 GVG $130
Spy Smasher
#8 VG $164
Whiz Comics
#7 GVG $264
#10 GVG $264
#17 GVG $203
#22 VG $139
#33 VG $122
#34 GVG $67
#35 VG $96
#36 VG $92
#39 VG $96
#40 VG $96
#47 VGF $77
#48 VG $62
#63 FVF $112
#66 FN $82
#67 FN $82
#70 FN $82
#78 VG $49
#79 VG $49
#95 VGF $55
#104 FVF $98
#105 FN $72
Whiz Comics (Wheaties Giveaway)
#1 VG $191
Wow Comics
#8 VGF $141

Contact Deanna (Ext. 451) or Joe (Ext. 452) Toll Free (888) 355-9800,
fax (410) 560-7143 Outside the U.S. call (410) 560-5810
e-mail: pdeanna@diamondcomics.com
internet: www.diamondgalleries.com


RING IN
the
New Year
WITH THIS 'CERTIFIED COOL'* ISSUE OF
BIG BANG™ Comics
Presents
SHADOW™ Lady
Featuring OUR NEWEST Sensation
SHADOW Lady
IN HER FIRST 'POST-WAR ADVENTURE!
JANUARY
2.95
$3 IN CANADA
ISSUE No.17
BEGINNING THIS ISSUE
MURDER BY MICROPHONE
A BRAND NEW CHAPTER SERIAL IN
3 EPISODES
Also...
ZHANTIKA
PRINCESS of the JUNGLE
and
VENUS
GODDESS of LOVE and LAUGHTER
* SEE THE NOVEMBER '47 'PREVIEWS' FOR MORE INFO
© 1995 JERRY ACERNO
THRILLS
MYSTERY
Glamour
Reserve YOUR COPY TODAY!

CBM CONTENTS

NUMBER 55 Jan. 1998

FEATURES

Superman vs. The Big Red Cheese!
The Saga of the Heroes That Wouldn't Die! by Joseph Kary 18

Mac Raboy's Flying Boy!
Captain Marvel Jr.'s legendary artist! by Pat S. Calhoun 26

More Than Just The Marvel Family!
Fawcett took flack from Wertham too! by Nicky Wright 30

Skywald Horror Comics!
Scream, Nightmare, and Psycho! by Mike Howlett 34

Fawcett Figurines!
Hey kids, look! Statuettes of your favorite heroes! by Ron Menchine 44

All In Color For A Nickel!
Fawcett's grand experiment! by Steve Carey 48

The 30¢ Price Puzzle!
Making sense of Bronze Age Marvel Price Variants, Part II! by Jon McClure 54

Fifty Thrifty Years with Scrooge McDuck!
Collecting the first four figures of fandom's favorite financier! by Michael Naiman 58

An Origin Trilogy!
Captain Marvel Junior's amazing three-issue origin! by Keif Fromm 62

COLUMNS

Adventures Into Weird Words
Dell's Tarzan Turns 50! by Pat S. Calhoun 11

Comics Go To Court
Protecting Ownership of a Legend! by Peter Klee 13

Nolan's Notebook
Romance Mysteries! by Michelle Nolan 15

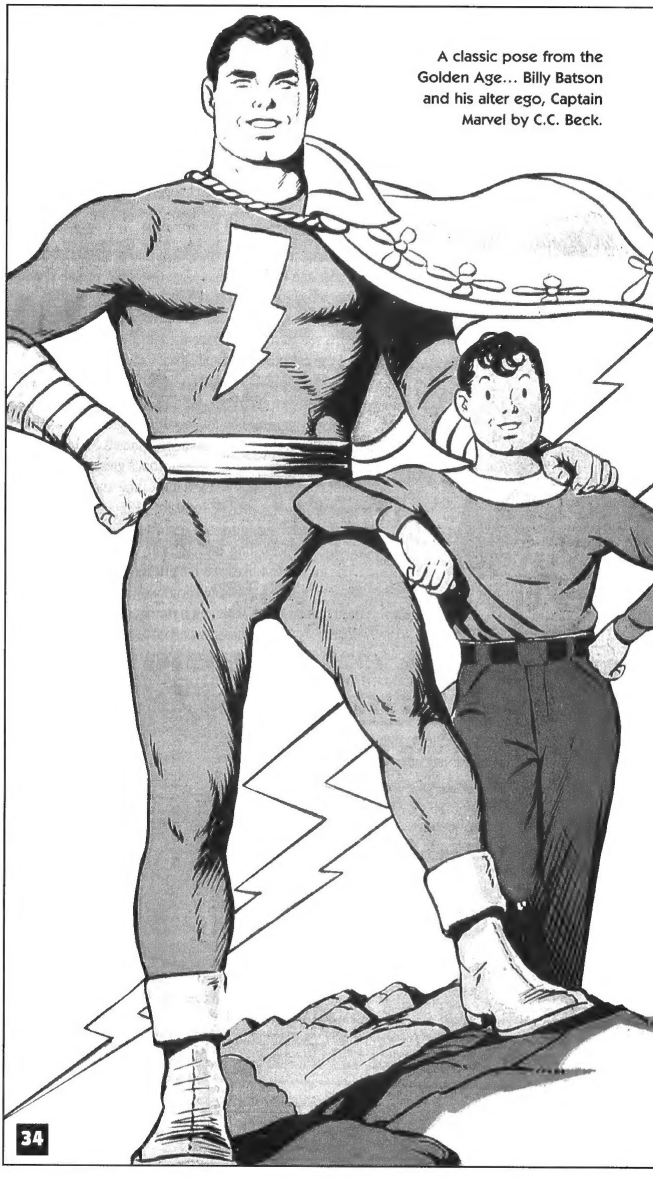
Comic Book Restoration 101
The Sticky Problem of Tape Removal! by Tracey Heft 80

Volume 2 • Number 55
January 1998
A Gemstone Publication

DEPARTMENTS

Letter from the Editor 4
Marketplace Mail 6
Subscription Service.....6
In Memoriam 7
Back Issues 8
Fandom Flashbacks 47
Market Reports 72
C.H. Ruppert Tribute ...74
Adverting Info. 76
Coming Next Issue 79

ON THE COVER: A close-up of the cover art on **Captain Marvel Jr. #17** (Mar 1944) by the great Mac Raboy.



A classic pose from the Golden Age... Billy Batson and his alter ego, Captain Marvel by C.C. Beck.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Comic Book Marketplace - Gemstone Publishing, Inc. copyright 1997 Stephen A. Geppi, all rights reserved under international and Pan-American copyright conventions. The information in this publication is protected under U.S. copyright law. Absolutely no part of this publication maybe reproduced in any form whatsoever (including mechanically, photographically, and/or electronically), without the prior written consent of the publisher. All articles and columns are the express opinion of the individual contributing artists and authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Gemstone Publishing, Comic Book Marketplace, its staff, or its advertisers. All characters, names, logos, trademarks, and symbols depicted and/or described in articles and other editorial material are owned and copyrighted by their individual companies. Inquiries regarding this publication (including advertising) and letters to the editor should be addressed to: Comic Book Marketplace, c/o Gemstone Publishing, Inc. (West), P.O. Box 180700, Coronado, CA 92178-0700, telephone **(619) 437-1996** FAX (619) 437-1993. First class subscription $60 (USA, residents of Missouri and Maryland add applicable sales tax); $69 (Canada and Mexico, US funds); $110 (England and Western Europe, US funds); $120 (Japan and Philippines, US funds). Advertising and subscription rates may change without notice. **Issue Number #55, January 1998**

Good *Guide*!

Since its release on the 17th of November, I have been reading and reviewing the new *Overstreet Comic Book Price Update* (*The Guide*) and I was quite impressed with several things about it. First, the number of price changes and the modifications to the myriad of spreads indicated to me that Bob must have done a massive amount of research. That effort showed on every page.

Second, the layout, design, and format of *The Guide* is really reader and user friendly. I liked the handy overall size and very much enjoyed the use of newsprint for the interior pages (kinda reminded me of a "real" comic from the good old days). I was also happy to see the return to three prices. Like you, I can calculate Good and Fine if I know the NM value. But, call me lazy, I just don't want to… and I really enjoy the speed and convenience afforded by the three-price format. But I guess I was most impressed by the fourth (or "gray") column that allowed me to instantly compare the present NM price to the NM value listed in the last Annual. What a great idea! This nifty "bonus column" will save me a lot of time when I develop my want list budget, calculate increases in the overall collection value for insurance purposes, and need quick price comparisons for buying, selling, and especially for trading.

The third area I liked was the pricing itself. All my research indicates that it is incredibly accurate (some have even suggested "on the nose"). Although my research and price ""networking" is not as extensive as Bob's, I still get quite a bit of feedback regarding the ups and downs in the market, especially with the corrections of the last year. I was impressed by the accurate adjustments to the Silver Age and early Bronze Age listings… especially those reductions to the Good and Fine prices. These adjustments are going to enable hobbyists to afford more books… and that's good news for the vast majority of collectors.

Few realize it, but *The Guide* is an historic document in the evolution of comic values and price guides. When we look back on it as the the years go by we'll not only point to it as the first time mid-grade values were adjusted downward… we'll also credit its courageous and credible reflection of accurate pricing as the catalyst that allowed many of us to become "whole run collectors" again… made the collecting of GD-FN material even more popular (as it should be)… made back issues more affordable… and generally revitalized our hobby!

May you fill the holes on your Silver Age want list… (and now you can!)

Gary

Gary M. Carter

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

EDITOR
Gary M.Carter

ART DIRECTOR
Lisa M.Carter

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Pat Calhoun

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Michael Naiman

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Scotty Moore • Phil Barnhart

COPY EDITORS
Beth Holley • Amanda Kitzmiller

EDITORIAL ASSOCIATES
Betty McChesney • Mick Rabin

OFFICE & SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER
Amanda Kitzmiller

DESIGN CONSULTANT
Joe Sikoryak

MAGAZINE CONSULTANT
Bill Howard

TECHNICAL CONSULTANTS
Mark Haynes • Arnie Sawyer
Mark Yturralde • Malcolm Hargrave

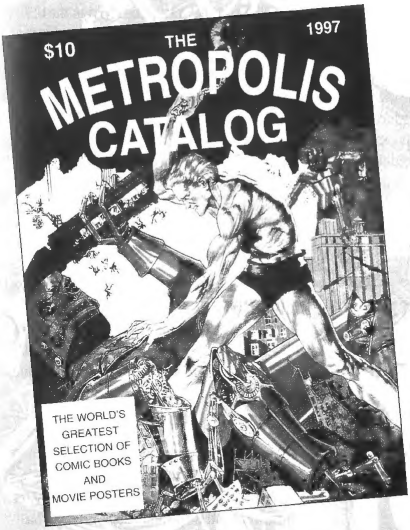
MARKETING DIRECTOR
J. C. Vaughn

GEMSTONE WEBSITE
www.gemstonepub.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS AND ARTISTS
David T. Alexander • Murphy Anderson
Jon Berk • Arnold T. Blumberg
Mike Brandenburg • Bob Brodsky
John Coates • J. Keith Contarino
Peter DePree • Duane Dimock • Steven Fears
Greig Flessel • Barry Forshaw • Jeff Gelb
Stephen Gentner • Rolf Gerdau
David Gerstein • Matthew Gore • Dave Grisez
Shawn Hamilton • Bruce Hamilton
Tracey Heft • Roger Hill • Robert Kiefer
Francis Litzinger • Gene Lomoriello
Chris Malins • Richard Martines
Harry Matetsky • Erich Medenbach
Lou Mougin • Will Murray • Michelle Nolan
Greg Pharis • Benn Ray • Ed Rhoades
Steve Ringgenberg • Charlie Roberts
Rob Satonica • Matt Schiffman • Arlen Schumer
Craig Shutt • Steve Sibra • Jon Signorelli
Rick Sloane • Gary Slusser • Chris Smith
J. David Spurlock • Larry Thomas
Lynn Woolley • Link Yaco

EDITORS EMERITUS
Stan Lee • Julie Schwartz

the most FANTASTIC New Catalog you've seen in years!



Available NOW... from Metropolis Comics!

70,000
Golden Age & Silver Age Comics!

300
Big Pages!

Huge vintage Movie Poster Section !

Metropolis Collectibles, Inc., 873 Broadway, Ste 201, NY, NY 10003
Phone: 212-260-4147 FAX: 212-260-4304
CBM Special: Only $5 if ordered before Dec. 1st (regularly $10)
(Credit Cards accepted - all foreign orders, please add $10)

Metropolis means...
Fantastic VARIETY! Fantastic QUALITY!
Fantastic SERVICE!

Thank you, Nicky Wright!

Back in 1969 I wrote a lengthy article called "Atlas In The Jungle," for the fanzine Comicology. This zine was published by Doug Fratz and the article dealt with Atlas' Lorna the Jungle Girl. One of the mysteries I was unable to solve was the identity of the "good" artist of the first dozen or so issues. (About three years ago, I reprinted the article in the amateur press association, Alpha-Omega.)

Sometime later at the San Diego Comic Convention I had occasion to ask Joe Sinnott if he knew the mysterious artist. While Joe worked with Atlas in the 1950s he was unable to identify the artist. He recommended asking Mark Evanier. I eventually got in touch with Mark and he said he'd ask Stan Lee about it, but Stan couldn't remember who this artist was. Then I came across Bill Black's article on Lorna and he similarly was unable to come up with a positive identification of the mystery artist.

So it is very gratifying that after almost 30 years the mystery is solved. I was familiar with Werner Roth's work on the 1960's X-Men, but never put the two together. Thanks again, Nicky!

Donald D. Ensign, California

The next 52

Thank you so much for the most entertaining magazine on the market today. There are a lot of thirty year olds who feel out of touch with today's steroid comics and are sufficiently imbued with the spirit of beautiful gaudy Silver and Gold stuff to feel a sense of wonder and belonging at CBM. Reading your lettercols, articles (particularly the scholarly and annotated ones, lovingly detailed) makes me feel that I have a thousand spiritual father figures out there. Septuagenarians (and younger, of course!) who still have the wonder and...who were there. Your magazine introduces me to a wonderful clique whose second question after "Where were you when JFK died?' is "What were you doing when JLA #1 came out?" and I love it.

An important part of the feel of such a "forum" magazine is the editorial tone and it is rare to see you ever give an answer to a LOC that is not charitable and courteous-well done. Also, if you ever decide to just do an interview with Julie Schwartz every month, well, that would be all right with me! Here's to the next 52 issues

Dr. Tony Di Dio, New South Wales, Australia

Captain America Annual

I just wanted to let you know that I think your magazine is very informative and interesting. Keep up the good work! (This includes all those that contribute.)

OK, here we go. The Captain America Annual was printed around 1942. The Overstreet Guide states that this is a Canadian-printed book.

I beg to differ. I live in Toronto and have seen over many years numerous different types of Canadian-printed comics. (By the way excellent article on the Canadian Comics, which are sadly overlooked.) About 90% of these books show on the front cover CDL or Canadian Edition or something to that effect... to show that they were printed here. Also, in just about every one of these books there are Canadian ads from Toronto or Winnipeg or wherever they happened to have been printed. A good example of this is when Superior started printing the E.C's up here. These comics came with ads for Toronto Companies in them, and there are many other examples. Now the Captain America Annual does not indicate at all that it was printed here. Not on the front cover, not on the inside cover (they are blank) and not anywhere inside.

Now I realize that I have not seen every Canadian reprint or original but I have never seen one without some type of indication. I was speaking with another gentleman who owns this very rare gem and he agrees that it is a true mystery. Here is one of his theories which makes sense to a point: The Marvel Mystery Annual was printed around the same time as this book. They both carry the exact same contents in them except the "Cap" is all black and white. Now would it not make sense that Timely decided not to sell two of the exact same books in the US? What would they do? Dump it into Canada to sell. But we must remember that Canada did not let American Comics across or borders at this time so, were they smuggled?

On the spine of the Annual is "HPC". I could not figure this one out. I looked in the Guide to see the names that all the Marvel Books went under and there is one called "Hercules Press." This would indicate to me that again it was made by an American Publisher. On the splash page of the first story there is a copyright which states "Copyright of Universal Comics U.S.A." Again an indication of a US printing.

If any of your readers out there have more information on this subject and can shed more light on this it would certainly be appreciated. I hope everyone is finding what they are searching for. Till next time, take care!

Joseph Shafir, Ontario, Canada

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE
12 issues for $60

Have CBM mailed right to your front door!

Mail check or MO payable to
Gemstone Publishing,
PO Box 180700, Coronado, CA 92178
MasterCard/Visa orders call
(619) 437-1996
(U.S FUNDS. MO & MD RESIDENTS ADD SALES TAX)

FOREIGN SUBSCRIPTIONS:
Canada/Mexico $62. Great Britain/France/Norway/Germany/Western Europe $110. Japan/Singapore/Philippines/Australia/Asian Pacific Rim $120 (All in U.S. Funds)

Vocab 101

A new word is sweeping through our hobby. It seems to be used to describe the best of the best. The word is "penultimate." The word has appeared from time to time in CBM, and elsewhere in the fan press. I recall seeing Superman described in a recent issue of CBM as the penultimate superhero. And I recall too seeing an auction advertisement, not too long ago, for Superman #53, noting enthusiastically that this is the "penultimate" Superman cover. The word seems to be everywhere.

Superman #53 is a great book. It sports a won-

derful portrait cover, and contains Superman's origin story, told on the occasion of his tenth anniversary. It is not, however, the penultimate Superman issue. Nor for that matter, is Superman the penultimate superhero. Period.

This is not merely a matter of opinion. It is a matter of fact. Why? Simply this: "Penultimate" does not mean best of the best, or even very good. What "penultimate" means is "next-to-the-last." Since Superman did not conclude his adventures with Superman #54, and since a great many other superheroes followed Superman into the world of comic lore, neither Superman nor his 53rd issue can be "penultimate." Wonderful perhaps. Best of the best, maybe. But penultimate, never.

I wouldn't bother mentioning this, except that the word seems to have crept into and swept through our hobby so rapidly that it's time to apply the brakes.

I don't really want to play "grammar cop." Most hobbyists would surely view any grammar cop as a wet blanket, a stiff who would like to dampen the enthusiasm of others. And that I would certainly never want to do. But, can't we find another word? One that is every bit as exuberant, but less likely to be misunderstood?

Mike Weng, Illinois

I agree, I wonder if CBM readers have any suggestions for more accurate terminology?

Excellent resource

Comic Book Marketplace is an excellent resource for comic info that I just discovered. Not just column fodder, but also for feature story ideas. CBM is worth subscribing to!

Mike Sangiacomo, Ohio

Prince Valiant

Finally got a little break from the beginning of school to write you a note and thank you for the wonderful job you did on my article about Princely Playthings—The Collectibles of Prince Valiant in issue #51. I never would have thought that just two months earlier as I was showing the draft to Gary at the San Diego Comic Con that it would be published so quickly.

It was a professional job all the way around, but I knew that it would be because I never intended to go to anyone but Comic Book Marketplace with my article. If it wasn't published there, then it wasn't going to be published. As far as I was concerned, your magazine was the only place for this kind of article. I have been purchasing your magazine since the beginning, and I have enjoyed the articles tremendously from the very first issues. The color section was unbelievable. My students, friends, and relatives all enjoyed the article immensely.

My English students especially liked the fact that Fresno High School was mentioned in my little biography. I even got a postcard from Germany from a man who bought CBM in a comic store over there and sent me a note about how much he enjoyed it. I guess I will be internationally known.

An added bonus was that I was in the same issue as my favorite artist, Al Williamson. I have collected his works in comic books for at least twenty years, and one of the biggest thrills of my life was this summer when Tom Yeates (another one of my favorites) introduced me to Al at his table in the artists' alley. It was a pleasure just to shake his hand.

Well, I better close as I have papers to grade, but I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed how the article turned out in CBM.

Mark Magarity, California

IN MEMORIAM

Samm Schwartz 1920 – 1997

Legendary Archie Comics artist, Samm Schwartz lost his battle with cancer at the age of 77. Born on October 12, 1920, Samm was raised in Brooklyn, New York. He studied at many art schools, most notably the Pratt School Of Design.

One of his closest friends during this period was cartoonist Joe Edwards. Edwards had found work at MLJ Publications in the early 1940s. He convinced Schwartz to do the same in 1941, and both artists' work appears in the famous *Archie Comics* #1. That comic was a runaway success and would soon lead to MLJ Publications changing its name to that of its flagship character.

Schwartz' early work for the company was not focused on humor... the most prominent feature Samm worked on in those years was the classic superhero, Black Jack. Schwartz brought a fresh slant to the still-young superhero genre with this character, who was attired in one of the most dynamic costumes of the Golden Age and one of the earliest examples of a "flippant" hero. The influence of such characters continues today in heroes like Marvel's Spider-Man and Crackerjack, one of the heroes in Kurt Busiek's "Astro City" series.

Samm Schwartz soon made the jump to humor with ease, and throughout the 1950s and '60s he became known as the premiere artist for Jughead stories, as well as one of the main artists tackling Reggie. Looking at his work from this period, his comedic flair, graphic design and pacing are flawless. Schwartz knew the value of page layout, and pushed the envelope perhaps more than any other Archie artist of his time, often experimenting with unusual or open panels and never being afraid to go beyond exaggeration for a laugh.

One of his greatest accomplishments was launching the series, *Archie's Jokebook*, which he wrote and drew, in 1953.

In the mid-1960s, Schwartz became the editor at Tower Publications, where he oversaw an eclectic array of titles from *Tippy Teen* to *Thunder Agents*.

Returning to Archie in the 1970s, Schwartz continued to draw for the company until his death.

Schwartz once said "I may not be a wealthy man and leave a lot of riches behind, but at least I know I made a lot of children laugh."

Classic Schwartz stories can be found in countless Archie Digests, as well as in the *Reggie's Revenge* and in the *Archie Americana Series: Best of the Fifties*, which features the timeless Schwartz tales, "Award To The Wise" and "T.N.T."

–By Paul Castiglia

CBM Back Issues are still available...but act quickly!

#27 Witness, Ducks, Capt. Marvel Jr.
#36 Detective Dan, Baseball comics!
#41 Frazetta, Phantom, Horror, & Felix!
#42 Most Collectible Comics, Joe Kubert
#43 Comics go to the Movies, & more!
#44 Wally Wood, Amaz. Fantasy #16
#45 JLA, Steve Skeates, Banned in Canada!
#46 Atomic Genre, Pre-Code Horror, etc.
#49 Batman & Robin, Bat-Collectibles, etc.
#50 Julie Schwartz, Big Bang Theory, etc.
#51 Al Williamson, Julie Schwartz Part II, Prince Valiant collectibles
#52 Archie, All-Star, Schwartz Part III, Fox

SOLD OUT: 22-26, 28-35, 37-40, 47-48

All Back Issues are $7.50 ea. (post paid)
CA, MO, & MD residents add sales tax
MC/VISA orders: (619) 437-1996

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE
BACK ISSUES
P.O. BOX 180700
Coronado • CA • 92178-0700

MARKETPLACE MAIL

On the planet

A brief note to tell you that you and your staff continue to publish the best magazine on the planet. It's the only piece of literature that I read from cover to cover. It is truly a top notch publication. I am a firm believer that Golden Age and Silver Age comics inspired the generations that read them. Lessons such as "with great power comes responsibility" and "using your brain to solve problems" are prominent themes. On top of that, they were and are a lot of fun to read. CBM recaptures that fun on a monthly basis. Thank you.

Christopher Frost, M.D., Kentucky

Thanks for your kind words, Chris... you've always been a loyal supporter of CBM and we appreciate it! Also, Lisa and Ryan sends their thanks for your thoughtful "care package."

Beautiful Spicys

CBM #53 was great. The centerfold of the Spicy covers is beautifully reproduced and suitable for framing. Give us more.

Sid Friedfertig, New York

Philosophical wavelength

Finished the September issue (#51), and thought I should write about a couple of the articles therein. First off let me say that I really enjoy your magazine—someone there is definitely on my philosophical wavelength. I've particularly enjoyed the recent pulp-related articles, but almost everything you've published has seemed to be aimed right at my collecting interests. (Though not necessarily my pocketbook.)

A good case in point is Will Murray's article about the Olga Mesmer strips in Spicy Mystery Stories. Spicys, even without covers, are usually pretty pricey pulps, and though I gaze at a few longingly every year at Pulpcon, I've never been able to convince myself that I could really afford any. What struck me as I read the article was the mention of a character from the Olga strip named Dr. Hugh Rankin. Now unless I read right by it, Will didn't mention the fact that Hugh Rankin is a name well-known to most pulp collectors—particularly those of us with fantasies of accumulating stacks and stacks of early Weird Tales. Checking The Collector's Index to Weird Tales (by Fred Cook and Sheldon Jaffery) I see that from August 1927 to December 1930, Rankin did 15 covers for WT, including the one for June 1930 that featured Robert E. Howard's Solomon Kane in "The Moon of Skulls." He did interior illustrations from July 1927 into the mid-1930s, either under his own name or the pseudonym "Doak." I believe he was the first illustrator for Howard stories featuring King Kull, Bran Mak Morn, James Allison ("The Valley of the Worm"), and the aforementioned Solomon Kane. (Conan? First done by Jayem Wilcox I believe.)

Since "Watt Dell" seems to be really Watt Dell Lovett, I guess he's not really Hugh Rankin in disguise, but I'll bet whoever he was, he was familiar with Rankin's name and work from Weird Tales.

Two other names caught my eye in Will's article. Max Plaisted has long been rumored to be a pseudonym of Jack Binder. The quote from Adolphe Barreaux (who I always thought sounded pretty pseudonymous himself) seems to indicate that Plaisted was really Plaisted. That 1969 Goulart interview didn't sound familiar—was it in Cheap Thrills?

The other name to set off bells was Jay McCardle. I'll bet not one pulp fan in ten would recognize the name, but I'll bet almost all of them would recognize his art. Whatever else he may have done in his life, his illustrations for Dell Publishing's Dr. Death should assure him a place in the pulp-illustration hall of fame. I first saw his stuff in Weinberg's reprint of "12 Must Die" (Pulp Classic #19, 1979). Dr. Death (now that's a really pricey pulp) didn't last very long back in 1935, but McCardle sure held up his end of things.

Moving on, that Prince Valiant piece by Magarity was beautiful. All those Dell covers could have come straight from Adventure or Golden Fleece. And suddenly I feel so much better about the $4 I wasted on that coloring book a few years ago.

But missing from the memorabilia checklist is the wonderful Marx playset from the mid-1950s. I received one of those for Christmas in those wonderful days. It's been nestled safely in the attic for about 30 years—if you (or old Mark M.) like, I can probably dig it out and send along some photos. It has lots of small figures, a castle with mandatory drawbridge and some plastic cannons (!) with probably long-gone ammunition. The odd thing about that present: at the time I had never heard of Prince Valiant. It wasn't in any of the newspapers I had seen up to that time. I didn't realize there was a film until probably years later when someone mentioned it in connection with Camelot. I never saw a Prince Valiant strip until 1976 when I

found a book of reprints in the Columbus library! (I've still never seen the 1954 film.)

The mention of Ray Palmer in another of your articles reminded me that I had found this copy of Amazing a few years ago. Judging from photos that I've seen of Palmer elsewhere, I'd say that's certainly him up to no good on the cover for July 1943. I believe the art here is by H. W. McCauley, an artist who could draw damsels in distress with the best of them.

I think you've done a pretty good job of labeling photos and artwork, but there's still some room for improvement there. Ideally I don't think the reader should have to hunt through the text for artist credits, sources, photo identification, etc. Well, thanks for you time.

John DeWalt, Ohio

Month After Month

Thanks for providing thoroughly enjoyable reading material month after month.

John S. Koch, Ontario, Canada

Flawed Thinking

After reading the comments in the letters column and CBM Forum (by Greg Pharis) in CBM #53, I truly believe that we as an industry and as a hobby are grasping at straws to understand what is happening all around us. I do not pretend to have the answers but after reading comments from all sides of the issues (retailer, fan, professional, consumer) for months now, I think that I can at least point out some of the flaws in our thinking.

Flaw #1: "Promoting the idea that comic books are collectible to the general public." This was the biggest mistake that we could have made. What this did was to take comics out of the realm of general entertainment and into a cult status that excludes the average consumer. Regardless of the changes in competition for expendable income, the public's perception of comics as a commodity/collectible has done more to decrease new comic sales than any other factor.

Flaw #2: "That the corporate mentality is unsuited to the comic industry." The corporate mentality created the comic industry, from day one comic books were simply a low cost, disposable form of entertainment meant to generate profit for their publishers. Nearly every character, story or title that you consider classic came from a corporate controlled publishing company. (Just ask Gold and Silver Age editors like Julius Schwartz and Stan Lee.) Once again it is the hobby elitist that seeks validation of his interests that is the problem. *(Continued on page 76)*

comic-fix

Professional Restoration Services

- **Professionally trained**
- **Extensive experience on key books**
- **Please call for references**

Diane Pullano
Paper Conservator

P.O. Box 15567 • Beverly Hills, CA 90209 • 213.782.6999

BUYING BUYING BUYING BUYING BUYING BUYING

WHY SELL YOUR COMICS TO ME?

HIGHEST PRICES PAID
IMMEDIATE CASH
NO COLLECTION TOO BIG OR TOO SMALL
I WILL TRAVEL ANYWHERE TO VIEW YOUR COLLECTION

WHY TAKE A CHANCE WITH ANYONE ELSE?

OVER 14 YEARS EXPERIENCE
SENIOR ADVISOR TO OVERSTREET PRICE GUIDE
PROMPT, PROFESSIONAL SERVICE
SPECIALIZING IN GOLDEN AND SILVER AGE

CALL, WRITE OR FAX ME!:
»»» NEW ADDRESS---NEW ADDRESS «««
HARLEY YEE
P.O. BOX 51758
LIVONIA, MI 48151-5758
PHONE: 800 731-1029 OR 313 421-7921
FAX: 313 421-7928
CALL OR WRITE FOR A FREE CATALOG

BUYING BUYING BUYING BUYING BUYING BUYING

DID YOU TURN INTO A MONSTER THE LAST TIME YOU RECEIVED YOUR ORDER?

If this looks familiar, treat yourself to honest grading and fair pricing by buying your Silver and Golden Age comics from us!

At FOUR COLOR COMICS, we specialize in treating the customer right and we unconditionally guarantee every book we sell!

FOUR COLOR COMICS

NEW YORK SHOWROOM—By Appointment Only—Hrs 10-6 Mndays.115 West 27th St. New York, NY 10001

IF YOU'VE GOT BOOKS TO SELL, CALL IMMEDIATELY: (212) 675-6990

Dell's Tarzan Turns 50!

Here is truly one of the great–and sadly unsung–teams in comic book history!

By Pat S. Calhoun

In 1947 Dell Comics published their first issue of *Tarzan*, the first Tarzan created expressly for comic books. As 1997 marks the 50th anniversary of this August event—for the *Tarzan* title ran strong and steady for over thirty years—a celebration is in order.

Four Color #134 (February 1947) featured a 53-page novel, "Tarzan and the Devil Ogre." The writer was Gaylord Dubois, who would write a good part of the series for the next two decades, and the artist was Jesse Marsh, who went on to draw the other Dell "tryout" issue and the first 153 issues of the regular title, as well as the bulk of the many giants and annuals. Here is truly one of the great—and sadly unsung—teams in comic book history, for Dubois' clear and straightforward stories were a perfect mate for the clean and simple yet richly rewarding ren already the lush beauties of the dark continent are taking hold, and many panels have natural details of surpassing charm, like a scarab beetle on a vine or a centipede climbing a wall.

"Tarzan and the Fires of Tohr" is the cover feature for the second *Four Color* issue, and Marsh's cover art shows his "new" Tarzan—with a curl on his forehead and a softer face. The story explores the first of the many wonderful "lost cities" of the African interior. Tohr, far from being ancient ruins, is alive and ruled by a despotic queen who sacrifices transgressors on a cruel idol built over a volcanic pit so that flames spring up when a vent is opened to incinerate the victim. Tarzan, D'Arnot, and two American archeologists, become captive "guests" of the wicked queen—who wants Tarzan as her mate. Marsh did a masterful job rendering the architecture of lost cities, and Tohr is a marvel dering that Marsh employed in his astounding run.

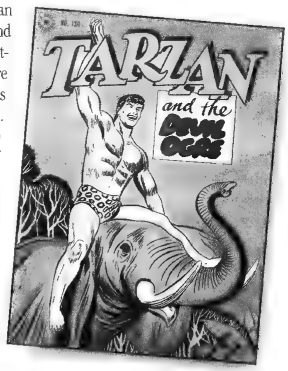
Jesse Marsh had previously drawn *Gene Autry* for Dell, but depicting the natural wonders of the African continent brought a new fullness to his style. The art in "The Devil Ogre" was a little tentative and was greatly refined in the second *Four Color* issue (#161 August 1947), and by the start of the regular series—*Tarzan* #1 which was dated January/February 1948—the look was firmly established, with a loincloth replacing the leopard-skin shorts Tarzan wore in the *Four Color* issues. However, throughout the run, Marsh—who penciled, inked, and lettered his own work for the Dell "California" office from his home in the San Gabriel valley in Southern California—would vary his techniques, sometimes even softening his heavy outlines.

"Tarzan and the Devil Ogre" begins when Tarzan and his French friend D'Arnot rescue a airplane pilot who is attacked by a lion after crash-landing in the jungle. The pilot is a young woman organizing a safari into the Rash-Dani mountains where her father disappeared three years ago. Tarzan agrees to lead the expedition, although the bearers are upset because their path goes into local taboo territory, haunted—they say—by talking great white apes and a mysterious devil ogre. Of course it's all building up to a confrontation between Tarzan and the Ogre, who turns out to be a huge gray ape—twice the size of the white giants.

Marsh's art is busier than what it would evolve into, but of massive structures with swooping stone stairways, statue-lined corridors, an amphitheater, and arena where Tarzan kills a lion with his bare hands.

The second story in the issue, "Tarzan and the Black Panther," pits Tarzan against a gang of Arab kidnappers and slave traders. It's a compendium of exotic flora and fauna; Tarzan's natives are always handsome creations as well, as being in harmony with their world.... Legend has it (courtesy of Alex Toth) that Marsh built up a huge library of books on African subjects for art reference, and it shows—the large panel on page five with a flock of cranes flying overhead is particularly delicious.

On the regular series books Marsh



Four Color #134 (Feb 1947) contains the 53-page book-length novel "Tarzan and the Devil Ogre" and was the first original Tarzan comic book from Dell. The story focuses on a search for a lost explorer and leads the lord of the jungle into a confrontation with a giant ape.

drew only the first seven covers, soon after that photo covers of the then-current screen Tarzan, Lex Barker, took over. The cover of issue #7 (January/February 1949) is an awesome finish for Jesse's run—Tarzan in "The Valley of the Monsters." Boy and Jane had made their appearances in the series by then; Tarzan's family and their care of… and affection for each other were always inspiring. As this ish begins Tarzan makes a hot-air balloon from surplus parachutes, and Boy and a friend get carried away in it. Tarzan and the native boy's father give chase in a borrowed airplane, and they find the lads have come down in a valley full of dinosaurs. Tarzan tackles Tyrannosauruses and Pterodactyls and eventually leads his friends to freedom. Dell's cover to cover packaging of a 32-page uninterrupted novel is one of the great comic book formats.

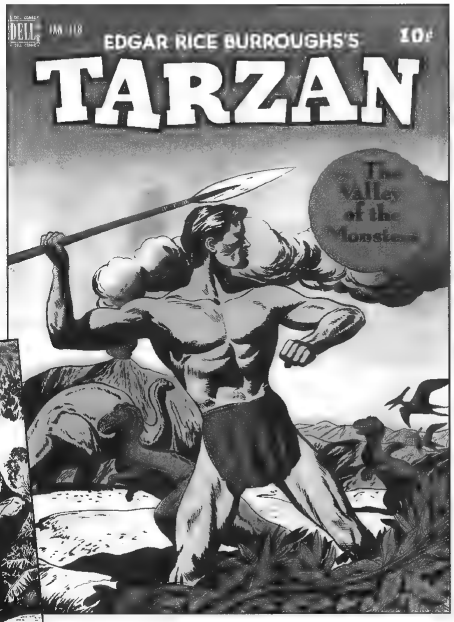
The second Dell Tarzan (Four Color #161, Aug 1947) features two novellas. The title story, "Tarzan and the Fires of Tohr" pits the ape-man against a lost city and its evil queen; In the second tale, Tarzan—with the help of Tantor the elephant—overcomes a gang of slave traders.

Tarzan #38 (November 1952) is a special treat for "lost city" buffs. First Tarzan helps the folk who inhabit the fortress island of Lutor in their fight against "The Cat Men of Crater Lake." The other Tarzan tale is a chapter in the saga of that most famous lost city, Opar. Tarzan, with the help of the dwarf warriors he helped settle in Opar, overthrows the nearby menace of evil Queen La before she can slay her captives—two white treasure-hunters Tarzan had urged to abandon their search.

The lead story in *Tarzan's Jungle Annual* #4 (1955), "Tarzan Defends the Walls of Cathne," again features the dwarves of Opar, riding in—at Tarzan's request—to save another lost city besieged by a tribe of intelligent apes. It's a 24-page Marsh marathon in the grand tradition.

Tarzan stayed strong into the Silver Age. In the mid 1960s, Gold Key took over the title and Russ Manning took over the art, and Dubois adapted a number of the original Edgar Rice Burroughs novels, including *Tarzan of the Apes*, the story that started it all back in 1912. When DC took over from Gold Key in 1972, Joe Kubert became the new artist and produced a credible version of the ape man and his world. But fine as those two artists are, I feel Jesse Marsh's Tarzan in the early Dell years, with the bold beauty of his definitive lines, is the definitive comic book Tarzan.

The back cover to Tarzan #7 is also memorable as Tarzan and an ape-friend hold a tug of war—with Boy cheering in the background. The light-hearted warmth of the scene is charming, one of the many Marsh bonuses the Dell issues offered.



Pat Calhoun and his family live in Santa Rosa, California. He has been collecting, researching and appreciating comic books since the early 1960s, and is a nationally recognized comic book historian.

The 32-page story "The Valley of the Monsters" (Tarzan #7, Jan/Feb 1949) details Tarzan's discovery of a prehistoric valley where dinosaurs still reign. It's an exciting novel, and Jesse Marsh's cover is sensational… and regrettably his last one on the run.

Protecting Ownership of a Legend

In the Spring of 1938, Detective Comics, Inc. published *Action Comics* #1 which contained the first appearance of what would become the most recognized and popular character in comic book history. Jerome Siegel and Joseph Shuster's revolutionary creation of a costumed hero with extraordinary powers, who fought for justice and against evil while maintaining a secret identity, became one of the most, if not the most, imitated comic book concepts. Superman's unprecedented popularity spawned a host of costumed imitators by DC's competitors, who quickly attempted to cash in on the public's insatiable thirst for more tales of superhero exploits.

Recognizing the lucrative nature of its novel character, DC took immediate steps to copyright all publications in which it featured Superman. Not all of DC's competitors were deterred by the copyrights. This article traces the legal battles brought by DC against two of its competitors for plagiarizing the Superman concept.

The first plagiarizer to be challenged was Fox Publications (a.k.a. Bruns Publications, Inc.). Fox opened its doors for business in 1939. The company's founder, Victor Fox, had first entered the comic book business the year before as an accountant for DC. In his role as an accountant, Victor Fox witnessed the surging sales of *Action Comics* and quickly recognized the money to be made from the Superman concept.

In the Spring of 1939, Fox published its first comic book, *Wonder Comics* #1, which featured a superpowered being called Wonderman. Upon recognizing the striking similarity between Wonderman and Superman, DC responded swiftly. Only days after *Wonder Comics* #1 hit the stands, DC's lawyers were in the Federal District Court for the Southern District of New York claiming copyright infringement and seeking an injunction prohibiting further plagiarism.

After reviewing the evidence, which consisted of copies of *Action Comics* #1-8 and *Wonder Comics* #1, the judge determined that "there has been unfair use by [Fox] of [DC's] copyrighted pictures and unfair paraphrase of [DC's] text accompanying its pictures. Consequently, in my opinion, infringement has been shown both textually and pictorially."

A chronicle of DC's legal battles over the Superman copyright

BY PETER H. KLEE

In the Spring of 1939, the judge issued a permanent injunction "forbidding the further publication by [Fox] of its cartoon character Wonderman, in such form as will make that cartoon character trespass in any respect on [DC's] Superman."

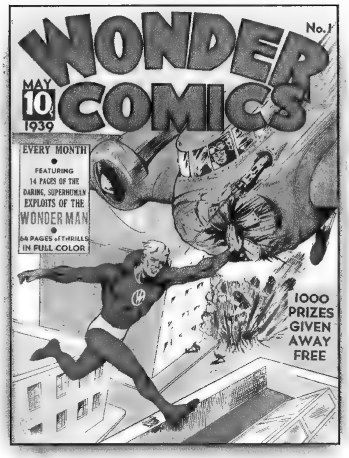
Although Fox complied with the injunction (Wonderman never again appeared in a Fox publication), it challenged the judge's ruling by appealing to the Court of Appeals. Fox found no sympathy there. The Court of Appeals decided that the striking similarities between Wonderman and Superman justified the lower court's finding of infringement.

Each publication portrays a man of miraculous strength and speed called "Superman" in *Action Comics* and "Wonderman" in the magazine of [Fox]. The attributes and antics of "Superman" and "Wonderman" are closely similar. Each at times conceals his strength beneath ordinary clothing but after removing his cloak stands revealed in full panoply in a skintight acrobatic costume. The only real difference between them is that "Superman" wears a blue uniform and "Wonderman" a red one. Each is termed the champion of the oppressed. Each is shown running toward a full moon "off into the night," and each is shown crushing a gun in his powerful hands. "Superman" is pictured stopping a bullet with his person and "Wonderman" as arresting and throwing back shells. Each is depicted as shot by three men, yet as wholly impervious to the missiles that strike him. "Superman" is shown as leaping over a twenty story building, and "Wonderman" as leaping from building to building. "Superman" and "Wonderman" are each endowed with sufficient strength to rip open a steel door. Each is described as being the strongest man in the world and each as battling against "evil and injustice."

Although they affirmed the injunction, the appellate court judges clearly were not themselves ardent Superman fans. In their written decision, they intimated their view that DC's books were "foolish rather than comic."

Even as DC was securing its legal victory over Fox in the Court of Appeals, another far more significant interloper burst onto the scene. In late 1939, Fawcett Publications, Inc. developed its own version of Superman, introducing him to the pub-

This article was originally published in CBM *#20 (Dec 1992).*


WONDER COMICS
No. 1
MAY 10 1939
EVERY MONTH
FEATURING 14 PAGES OF THE DARING, SUPERHUMAN EXPLOITS OF THE WONDER MAN
68 PAGES-ET-HULLS IN FULL COLOR
1000 PRIZES GIVEN AWAY FREE

Victor Fox' Wonder Comics #1 was the first concept challenged by DC Comics after the successful launch of Superman.

lic as "Captain Marvel" in the January 1940 issue of *Whiz Comics*. For reasons that are not clear, DC delayed almost two years, until September 9, 1941, before filing a legal action to protect its copyright from this new imitator. During that delay, Fawcett was able to successfully market Captain Marvel to the public and established a loyal and widespread following.

Once the suit was finally filed, the legal battle over Superman and Captain Marvel was waged for almost nine years before the case even reached trial. Fawcett capitalized on the nine-year delay by flooding the market with a panoply of other publications expanding the Captain Marvel concept, including *Captain Marvel Adventures, Captain Marvel Jr., Mary Marvel Comics, WOW Comics, America's Greatest Comics* and *Master Comics*. By 1949, with the Marvel family of characters as its standard bearer, Fawcett's sales had mushroomed to 70 million comic books a year.

As Fawcett's sales rose, so did the stakes in the infringement lawsuit, and so did the litigants' mutual animosity. The pretrial proceedings became replete with "procedural bickering," requiring frequent intervention by the court. The trial that finally took place in 1950 was no less bitterly fought, with each side presenting evidence that dramatically contradicted the evidence of the other. In support of its case, DC called employees of Fawcett, who testified that their superiors had instructed them "to imitate the 'Superman' strips and the dialogue and script as closely as possible, and that they did so."

In response, Fawcett called the superiors, who denied having given any such instructions. DC called an independent artist (who did not work for either publisher), who testified that C. C. Beck, Captain Marvel's chief artist, had admitted copying Superman. Fawcett than called Beck to the stand, and he denied having ever such made such admissions. Each side also retained experts to testify as to the significance of claimed similarities and dissimilar ities between the portrayals of the two characters. Needless to say, the experts flatly contradicted each other.

After hearing all of the evidence, on April 10, 1950, the trial judge rendered his decision. First, he found that there was actual copying of Superman by Fawcett: "I am satisfied from all of the evidence that there was actual copying."

Both "Captain Marvel" and "Superman" have the same athletic physique. Both have substantially the same clean-cut faces. Both wear the conventional regalia of the gymnast or circus acrobat—skintight uniforms, boots, and a cape which is used in flying. The only real difference is in the color of their costumes. "Superman's" being blue and "Captain Marvel's" red. The incredible feats, performed by both, such as leaping great distances, flying through the air, exhibitions of marvelous strength and speed, and imperviousness to bullets, shells, explosions, knives and poisons, are identical, and the settings in which the feats are performed are often closely similar, substantially all of the feats performed by 'Superman' are later duplicated by "Captain Marvel." Identical phrases, expressions and the dialogues are frequently found in the panels.

"Superman" is represented as a normal human being, a meek newspaper reporter wearing eye glasses (Clark Kent), who, by throwing off his regular clothes, appears in his athletic costume and becomes a superhuman being and performs superhuman feats in the interests of justice and to overthrow evil. "Captain Marvel" is likewise represented as a normal human being, a radio reporter (Billy Batson), who, by uttering the magic word "Shazam," is transformed into a superhuman being, and, in that capacity, also performs superhuman feats in the interests of justice and to overthrow evil. There are villains in both stories, mad scientists who resemble each other in appearance, and who, by similar devices and methods, attempt to dispose of the hero ("Superman" or "Captain Marvel"), so that they can execute their plans of destruction without molestation.

The stories depicted in the respective panels are much the same, as, for example, the experiences of both Clark Kent and Billy Batson in applying for jobs as reporters, being turned down, and finally being accepted as the result of having performed the same superhuman feat. In other instances they are different. For example, there is no romantic element in the "Captain Marvel" stories, such as Lois Lane, the girl reporter, who is a permanent member of the "Superman" cast; nor do the "Superman" stories have an ever-present evil enemy of the hero like Sivana."

However, after ruling in favor of DC on the issue of copying, the judge nevertheless found that Fawcett was immune from liability because DC had "abandoned" its copyright. The judge based his finding of abandonment on his determination that DC had allowed the McClure Newspaper Syndicate to print the daily syndicated "Superman" strip in its newspapers without properly identifying the property as copyrighted. In other words, although DC had properly copyrighted its comic books, because the newspaper syndicate that published Superman strips (with DC's permission) had not properly protected the copyright, all copyright rights were not applicable.

Fortunately for DC, Fawcett's victory was short-lived. DC appealed and, a year later, the Court of Appeals reversed the lower court's ruling. The Court of Appeals ruled that in order to establish that DC abandoned its literary property, Fawcett had to prove that DC intended to do so. Because there was no evidence that DC ever intended to surrender its copyright (to the contrary, the evidence established that DC at all times vigorously sought to enforce the copyright), the lower court's finding of abandonment could not stand.

In ruling for DC, the Court of Appeals nevertheless again took it upon itself (as it had done 11 years earlier) to disclose its underwhelming esteem for the literary property it had just protected, describing it as "silly pictures." The Court of Appeals sent the case back to the lower court, ordering the lower court to consider a variety of additional issues that had not been raised or decided at the trial.

The reversal of its victory by the Court of Appeals broke Fawcett's spirit and crippled its defensive efforts. Less than two years later, Captain Marvel and the Marvel family disappeared from the newsstands....

By Michelle Nolan

Nearly 6,000 romance comics were published beginning with Crestwood's *Young Romance* in 1947 and ending with DC's *Young Love* 30 years later.

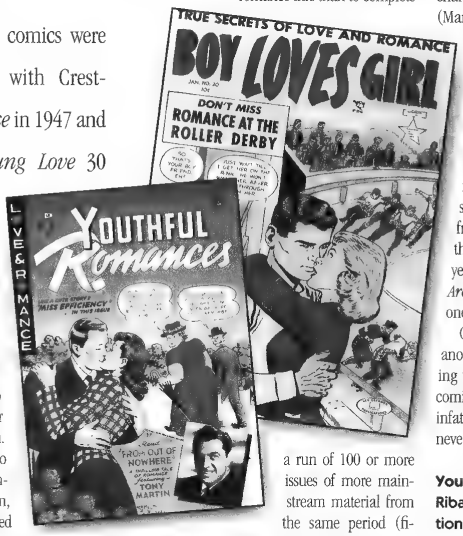
When it comes to kitsch, love comics conquer all. There's nothing like romance in the comics for the pure, unadulterated fun of funk. Their variety is almost infinite, so no matter what captures your fancy, there's something for you.

I'm fortunate to have two California friends, Jim Vadenboncoeur, Jr. and Dan Stevenson, who also love this unadulterated fun and funk as much as I do… and who also collect scads of romance comics. Among the three of us we've managed to amass more than 98 percent of all the romance comics ever published (over the last three decades). And we all continue to be fascinated and sometimes astonished by the incredible variety of publishers and titles.

But you don't have to be a romance completist to enjoy this particular comic collecting passion. You just need to be aware of all the ways you can go looking for love… comics that is!

Besides the obvious methods of collecting romance comics—by artist, by company, by title, by time period—you can also search for love in lots of other ways… including by how odd, strange, or downright smarmy the comic is. (Speaking of searches, *Search for Love* was the title of a little-known two-issue run from the American Comics Group in 1950. It typifies one way I like to collect—with short runs of truly obscure romance titles.)

Did you know that more than 100 romance comic titles ran six issues or fewer? It's this fact that has allowed me to collect dozens of "complete runs." Yet, sometimes it can be more difficult or take longer to locate six issues of an obscure 1950's romance title than to complete a run of 100 or more issues of more mainstream material from the same period (financial constraints notwithstanding).



For example, there's *My Personal Problem*. I've had trouble finding issues from the two short-lived series published by Ajax, one of the more obscure publishers of the 1950s. There were only four issues published in 1955-56 and a mere three issues in 1957-58. So far, *My Personal Problem* #3 (first series, September 1956) and #1 and 3 (second series, October 1957 and May 1958) have eluded me.

When I finally solve *My Personal Problem*, it will probably cost me only a few bucks for each book, and that's part of the fun. Just as in real life, the thrill of the chase is part of what makes collecting romance books rewarding.

Another nifty short run is Avon's *Going Steady with Betty* (November/December 1949), which changed its title to *Betty and Her Steady* with #2 (March/April 1950). This is part teen humor, part romance, and all very tough to find. It took me a long time to locate both issues, and in each case I finally found them in the back of dealers' "miscellaneous" boxes. This title ran only two issues—not unusual for Avon—and I've always wondered if the reason the cover changed from teen humor in the first issue to serious romance for the second issue was because of flack received from Archie Comics, which had been telling the tales of vivacious Betty Cooper for eight years to that point. Archie published the first of *Archie's Girls Betty & Veronica* as an undated one-shot in 1950.

Of course, *Betty and Her Steady* could just be another victim of the infamous "Love Glut" during the second half of 1950, when so many love comics bit the dust after the industry became too infatuated with them. At any rate, we'll probably never know, but it's fun to speculate on things like

Youthful Romances #7 (Feb 1954, Ribage Publ.) features a stab at generational humor in romance comics. Boy Loves Girl #30 (Jan 1953, Lev Gleason Publ.) features the period classic "Romance at the Roller Derby."

Romance Mysteries!

Tales of sordid sorority sisters and smoldering secrets of sultry sirens!

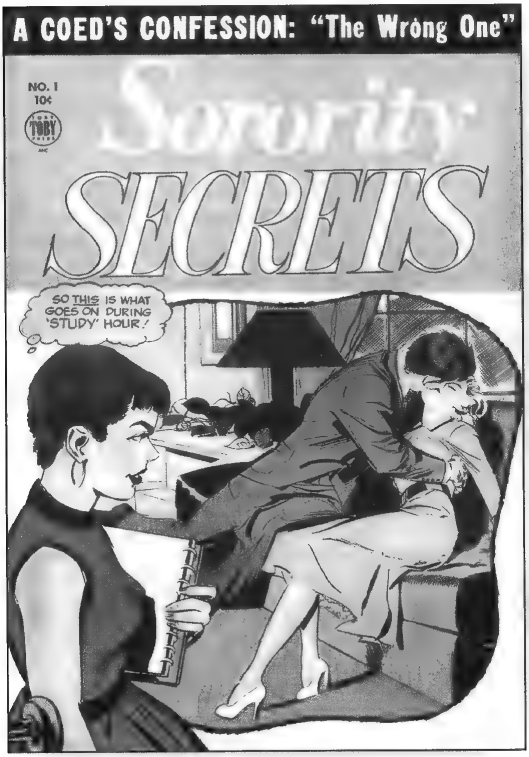
that. Collecting romance comics can positively rot your brain!

A few short runs of romance comics have become an expensive flirtation on the collecting scene, especially the three issues of *Negro Romance* from Fawcett in 1950 (there was a #4 from Charlton in 1955, with the title changed to *Negro Romances*) and the four issues of *Forbidden Love* from Quality in 1950.

Forbidden Love was no more licentious than any other of the 14 "exotic romantic adventures" titles published by Quality in 1950, despite the promise of "Smoldering Secrets of Sultry Sirens" on the cover of #1 (March 1950). But the title and the come-hither covers have been a favorite of collectors for years.

Negro Romance, of course, also has been a favorite for those who collect the ultimate in comic book period pieces. One reason the prices on these books rose quickly many years ago is that collectors of black memorabilia want them even more than most romance collectors.

Sorority Secrets #1 (Jul 1954, one-shot, Toby Press) is the type of love comic that had Dr. Fredric Wertham screaming bloody murder in his book Seduction of the Innocent.



Some collectors enjoy gathering romance comics with photo covers of movie stars. Quality led the way in this department until it went to all line-drawn covers during 1953, although Standard also included quite a few film folks among the 100 romance comics that venerable company published in 1949-54 (before kissing off the genre for good). The stars and starlets are often identified underneath the indicia in both Quality and Standard titles.

However, many of the folks featured on the photo covers were models, including almost all the people who populated the covers of Fawcett's romance line. All 235 Fawcett romance comics have photo covers (although a few also include line art). Only a few are of actual movie stars, though, including one of the scarcest romance comics of all—*Sweethearts* #119 (January 1953, not 1954 as speculated in the *Overstreet Price Guide*).

Sweethearts #119 has a photo cover of none other than Marilyn Monroe, who coyly can't seem to decide whether she likes Richard Widmark's nose so close to her eye shadow. The *Gerber Photo-Journal* rates this as a "6" on the scarcity index, but for my money this issue definitely rates a "7." Just try to find one at any price!

Monroe and Widmark had played together in only one movie up to that time, the B drama *Don't Bother to Knock* (1952). (They also appeared, but never together, in the 1952 film *O'Henry's Full House*.) Monroe plays a deranged babysitter in *Don't Bother to Knock*—her first leading dramatic role—but I haven't seen the film in more than 15 years, so I can't recall if the cover to *Sweethearts* #119 is a direct still from the film or something else.

Then there are the two great remaining mysteries of romance comic collecting, concerning *Love Tales* from Marvel/Atlas and *Diary Confessions* from Stanmor/Key.

The most vexing is whether *Love Tales* #59 exists, and this is vexing indeed for Atlas collectors. #58 is dated August 1952 and #60 is dated February 1955, but no trace of #59 has ever turned up. No one knows whether #59 exists. Atlas also suspended *True Secrets* with #21 for August 1952, but picked up with #22 in February 1954.

As for *Diary Confessions*, Stanmor, Key, Master, Merit, Trojan, Gilmor, Aragon and maybe other companies and subsidiaries published a raft of confusing titles from 1950-56. The relationship between of all these firms is not always crystal clear, and it's beyond the scope of this article to examine them.

But, looking at just *Diary Confessions*, reveals a major puzzle. The title runs regularly from #9, May 1955 (the first issue, continued from *Ideal Romance* #8) through #12 (November 1955). I also have the last known issue of *Diary Confessions* #14 (April 1956), which has a great "pirate and princess" costume ball cover. But where is *Diary Confessions* #13?

Diary Confessions #14 says "formerly *Ideal Romance*" in the indicia, and so does #9, but #10, 11, and 12 do not (it was customary of some publishers to indicate a title change, but usually only in the first issue of the new title). So, where is #13? Does

it exist? We may never know the answer, and collectors of this company's comics just may be searching for a phantom comic!

At any rate, those are the two great remaining romance mysteries. By the way, it's now fairly well established that Marvel's *Love Trails* #2 does not exist, but I'd be happy to see anyone prove me wrong.

Some collectors enjoy searching for especially funky romance comics with oddball themes... and I'm one of them. Such a title is *Mr. Anthony's Love Clinic* (five issues from Hillman in 1949-50, based on a radio show).

My all-time favorite funky romance title is the classic little scarcity *Sorority Secrets*, a one-shot from Toby Press dated July 1954. The stories and art are typical of the period—nothing special—but the title is outrageous. The good Dr. Wertham must have loved that one!

I had always thought this was a one-shot until I discovered that Toby's last issue of *Great Lover Romances*, which is #22 (May 1955), is a "Special Sororities Issue!" as the blurb at the top of the cover goes. Sure enough, these tales of sordid sorority sisters must have been left over from the never-published second issue of *Sorority Secrets*. It just goes to show that a good (or a bad) story never goes to waste in the wonderful world of romance comics.

Another nifty way to collect romance comics is by the cover themes. For example, I love collecting romantic covers involving sports, especially baseball (my favorite sport).

Three wonderful examples are *True Love Confessions* #9 (September 1955) from the short-lived company Premier; *In Love* #1 (September 1954) from Simon & Kirby's even shorter-lived Mainline Publications; and *Boy Loves Girl* #30 (January 1953) from Lev Gleason Publications, which consistently published some of the most compelling of all comics when it came to good stories.

True Love Confessions #9 features the never-to-be-forgotten little six page epic "Love Hits a Home Run," which is my all-time favorite mixed metaphor. In it, a woman returns to her baseball-playing lover after they had broken up thanks to a scheme concocted by her sister. The way they get back together is just about the best hokum ever printed in comics—she actually catches one of his foul balls after rushing to a game when she learns of her sister's scheme! "It's the marriage license I'm going to autograph, Darling!" blurts Duke the Slugger before the fadeout kiss. (Do you know how hard it is to catch a foul ball (much less have one come near you? I've attended hundreds of ball games over the years and I've snagged exactly two foul balls... both on the second or third bounce, of course!)

In Love #1 has a well done 20-page Simon & Kirby baseball novel, "Bride of the Star." By the way, all four issues of this short series are well done, including the novel in #3, "Artist Loves Model," the romantic saga of the struggling comic-strip cartoonist Inky Wells. This is another one that has to be seen to be believed! Inky Wells?

Boy Loves Girl #30 has one of the classics, "Romance at the Roller Derby." There were several other roller derby love stories done in the 1950s, but this one might be the best. Some of you are too young to remember the roller derby, but this was a fabulous sporting event "packed with thrills, spills and chills" as they used to say. There was nothing like Saturday night at the roller derby!

The list of funky romance comics never ends, especially during the 1950's period. As a particularly smarmy example, consider the pretentiously titled *Love Classics* #2 (February 1950) from Marvel in its pre-Atlas days, when its romance logo was a heart with the words "A Lover's Magazine." *Love Classics* #2, which is pictured in the current *Overstreet Price Guide*, features the lovely Warner Bros. star Virginia Mayo on the cover (she was at her peak, having starred in the classic James Cagney vehicle White Heat in 1949).

CONFESSIONS of GIRLS in LOVE
TRUE LOVE CONFESSIONS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SEPTEMBER
10c
AS I TURNED THE BASEBALL I HAD CAUGHT AT LAST I HAD AN EXCUSE TO SEE DUKE AGAIN!
RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE CROWD HE KISSED ME! I KNEW IT WAS WRONG, I KNEW THAT MY OLDER SISTER MARION DESERVED A CHANCE AT HIS LOVE BEFORE I DID... BUT I COULDN'T SAY NO TO MY HEART! I KNEW WE WERE IN LOVE, BUT I DID NOT KNOW THE UNHAPPINESS OUR LOVE COULD CAUSE

Love Classics #2 has what at the time was one of the longest single stories ever presented in comics—a 30-page epic entitled "I Was a Small Town Flirt." This one, still may be the longest romantic story ever contained in a single issue, can only be described as a classic of kitsch! I wonder if Stan Lee had anything to do with it?

Finally, if your really looking for funky love, you have to get a copy of *Youthful Romances* #7 (February 1954). The cover portrays an old battle ax muttering, "What's come over the young people these days—kissing right out there in public!" To which her Casper Milquetoast husband bravely replies, "Oh, fiddlesticks, Matilda. We did the same thing when we were young, remember?"

I could go on forever about the funk in old romance comics, but that's all for now. If you like the strange and the odd of the comic world, you'll love odd romance books. And best of all, most are still to be had a bargain prices!

In the meantime, sweet dreams—of old comics!

True Love Confessions #9 (Sep 1954, Premier Magazines) has what looks like a pre-Lois Lane Kurt Schaffenberger cover and the sports/love tale "Love Hits a Home Run."

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. In real life, Michelle works as a freelance journalist.

SUPERMAN & ACTION COMICS © 1997 DC

Superman vs.

From Whiz Comics to Shazam

If suing people is a typical American past-time, then Superman really does stand for truth and justice, and the American way. The first legal action on his behalf was launched in 1940, when his publishers forced a competing comic book character, Wonderman, off the stands on the grounds of copyright infringement. But Superman's biggest legal fight occurred in the early 1950s, when he took on Captain Marvel, the one superhero of that time who may have been even more popular than he was. At the time, it seemed that the son of Krypton had won that fight. In an out of court settlement, Captain Marvel's publisher, Fawcett Publications, agreed to cease publishing the character, and pay Superman's owners a hefty fine in the bargain. But appearances can be deceiving. In reality it was Captain Marvel who won that battle...and this article will explain how.

The core idea of Superman hasn't changed since he first appeared in 1938. As the judge who heard the case against Fawcett described him, he is "an athletic human being... with distinctive features and a distinctive type of costume, who was portrayed in various scenes and incidents as having and exercising superhuman qualities and being a blessing to mankind as an avenger of all evil, and as being in ordinary life, one Clark Kent, a meek newspaper reporter wearing eye glasses." Sent to Earth as a baby from the exploding planet Krypton, his super-human qualities were part of his alien heritage.

Most people reading comics today would not even realize that Captain Marvel was once Superman's chief competitor, since the Captain is now owned and published by the same company that publishes Superman. But Captain Marvel was originally owned by Fawcett Comics, and was Superman's fiercest newsstand rival, with a peak circulation greater than Superman's for a number of years. He started off as Billy Batson, a

10¢
ACTION COMICS
Introducing: "THE SUPERGIRL FROM KRYPTON!" Is She Friend or Foe?
GREAT GUNS! A GIRL FLYING! IT-UH-MUST BE AN ILLUSION!
LOOK AGAIN, SUPERMAN! IT'S ME - SUPERGIRL! AND I HAVE ALL YOUR POWERS!
PLUS! SUPERMAN MEETS METALLO!

Captain Marvel Adventures #18 (origin and first appearance of Mary Marvel; Dec 11, 1942) and Action Comics #252 (origin and first appearance of Supergirl; May 1959).

BY JOSEPH KARY

The Big Red Cheese

...the saga of the heroes that wouldn't die!

young orphan who was given super powers by an ancient Egyptian wizard named Shazam. When Billy says the wizard's name, a magic lightning bolt flashes down and transforms him into Captain Marvel, a muscular adult with the powers of mythological gods and heroes. Like Superman, he wore a colourful costume and a cape, had superhuman strength, speed and invulnerability, could fly, and spent his time protecting the world from evil-doers. When not being Captain Marvel, Billy was a reporter too, for radio station WHIZ. He made his debut in January in *Whiz Comics*, a year and a half after Superman had first appeared in *Action Comics*.

Superman's publishers, then called Detective Inc., sent Fawcett a cease and desist letter in June of 1941. At that time, Captain Marvel's popularity was starting to rise; Fawcett had just introduced a second comic book about him, called *Captain Marvel Adventures*, simultaneous with the release of a Republic Pictures motion picture serial based on the character called *The Adventures of Captain Marvel*. Both Republic and Fawcett ignored the letter, and Captain Marvel's popularity just kept on growing, as Fawcett generated more and more spin-offs. Readers soon discovered a younger version of the hero, called Captain Marvel Jr., and learned that Billy Batson had a sister named Mary, who turned into Mary Marvel when she said "Shazam." They each got their own comic book, and teamed up together in a series of stories in *Marvel Family*. Soon there seemed to be more comic books about the Marvels than there were about Superman, and some collectors feel that many were better written and better drawn. Superman lost a lot of his creative spark with the departure of his original creators, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster; but Captain Marvel just kept getting better.

Detective Inc. avoided taking any further legal steps for a while, perhaps because the ownership of Superman had itself been under the cloud of a lawsuit brought by Siegel and Shuster. But with that lawsuit settled, and Captain Marvel's star continually rising, they finally took decisive legal action. They hired Louis Nizer, one of the most famous lawyers in the country, to sue Fawcett. The trial was held in 1950, with enough lawyers in the court to field a baseball team. Detective Inc., by then called National Comics Publications, had four lawyers on their side, including Nizer; Fawcett had four of their own, and the Republic Pictures movie studio sent along one to represent their interests.

The trial judge's decision can be found in the law library, in the ninety-third volume of the Federal Supplement law reporter, sandwiched between a case in which Orson Welles was sued for plagiarism over his classic movie *Citizen Kane*, and one in which a woman of Japanese descent sued the U.S. Secretary of State after she was deprived of her American citizenship for having voted in the 1946 Japanese election. After hearing testimony from a number of writers and artists,

ALL GRAPHICS © FAWCETT PUBLICATIONS INC UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

the judge decided that there had been deliberate copying of Superman stories by the Captain Marvel team. As he explained:

Both "Captain Marvel" and "Superman" have the same athletic physique. Both have substantially the same clean-cut faces. Both wear the conventional regalia of the gymnast or circus acrobat—skin tight uniforms, boots, and a cape which is used in flying. The only real difference is in the colour of their costumes, "Superman's" being blue and "Captain Marvel's" red. The incredible feats, performed by both, such as leaping great distances, flying through the air, exhibitions of marvellous strength and speed, and imperviousness to bullets, shells, explosions, knives and poisons, are identical, and the settings in which the feats are performed are often closely similar. Substantially all of the feats performed by "Superman" are later duplicated by "Captain Marvel." Identical phrases, expressions and dialogues are frequently found in the panels.

AT HOME WITH THE
MARVEL FAMILY...
GOSH, CAP, IT MAKES ME PROUD THE WAY AMERICANS ARE BUYING WAR BONDS AND STAMPS!
BUT IT'S THAT WAY! WHEN AMERICANS HAVE A JOB TO DO, THEY DO IT UP BROWN!
RIGHT, MARY, ALWAYS BEEN
AND THEY'RE GOING TO KEEP ON BUYING-REGULARLY AND OFTEN!
THAT'S RIGHT! THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT
U.S. WAR BONDS AND STAMPS!
HAVE YOU BOUGHT YOUR SHARE THIS WEEK?

The Marvel Family promotes war bonds and stamps from the inside front cover of Captain Marvel Jr. #15 (Jan 1944). That same issue features the classic Captain Nazi story "The Human Detonator" and time-travel classic "Captain Marvel Jr. & the Time-Killers."

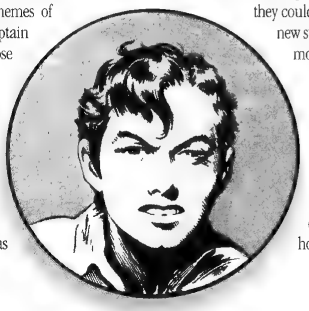
This, and the fact that both characters had secret identities as reporters and fought mad scientists with schemes of destruction, led the judge to believe that Captain Marvel was indeed an imitation. Today, all those characteristics simply sound like a generic superhero, one of ten thousand or more; but then, the whole idea of a superhero was still new. Reading the judgment now makes one realize just how innovative Siegel and Shuster's creation was.

Although the judge decided in Superman's favour, his publishers won only a moral victory. Captain Marvel got off on a technicality. The application of copyright law to comic stories was still new, and it wasn't quite clear whether the copyright notice should be made in the way you would for a novel or short story, or the way you would for a drawing or painting. The judge held that Superman's publishers had lost their copyright because the copyright notice had not been properly affixed to some of the Superman newspaper comic strips. That made any copying by Fawcett perfectly legal.

National would probably have been happier if the judge had just said that Captain Marvel wasn't an imitation. Not only had they lost their lawsuit, but they had lost their copyright in the bargain, and so became fair game for anyone who wanted to publish blatant Superman rip-offs, or even to reprint the Superman stories that had defective copyrights. One could see a multi-million dollar business going up in smoke. National appealed the decision; they really didn't have much choice.

The appeal was attended by even more lawyers than had appeared at the original trial, ten in all. The decision was written by a Circuit Judge named Learned Hand, probably the most respected American judge who was never named to the Supreme Court, who had also been one of the judges that decided Superman's earlier case against Wonderman. He and the two judges who heard the case with him decided in favour of National. A copyright, they said, wasn't as easy to lose as all that; a simple mistake in the way the notice was put on didn't have the disastrous consequences that the trial judge thought it did. They said that a new trial would have to be held.

The most interesting thing about their decision, at least from the viewpoint of those of us who wish that Fawcett had continued publishing Captain Marvel, was that the decision did not say that Captain Marvel was a violation of the copyright on Superman. Instead, it said that some of the stories about Captain Marvel may have been imitations of some of the stories about Superman. Those stories that were imitations would be violations of the copyright on the original stories; any other stories about Captain Marvel were perfectly legal and legitimate. As the law says, you can't copyright ideas, but only particular ways of expressing the ideas. At the new trial, the court would have to proceed story by story, seeing which ones were the imitations. Even if National was successful on the retrial, it wouldn't have put Captain Marvel out of business. Fawcett might have had to pay National damages, but they could have kept on putting out new stories, so long as they were more careful in the future.



However, it seems that Fawcett didn't really have any enthusiasm for continuing. The superhero craze was winding down; sales were declining, and superhero comics were giving way to horror, crime and romance

comics. Rather than go through yet another trial, Fawcett settled out of court, agreeing never to publish another comic book about Captain Marvel. The Big Red Cheese, as his arch-enemy Dr. Sivana calls him, disappeared from the newsstands by the end of 1953 and didn't appear again in comics for almost twenty years, until National, of all companies, reached an agreement with Fawcett to publish his adventures themselves, in a Bronze Age title (*Shazam*). But that is another story; more interesting is how Captain Marvel's retirement affected Superman, and how it affected comic book superheroes in general.

IT'S A GIANT! (BUT DON'T BE SCARED)
324 Pages OF YOUR FAVORITE COMICS HEROES IN FULL COLOR!
SPY SMASHER
BULLETMAN
CAPT. MARVEL
IBIS
MR. SCARLET
Gift Comics
A terrific treat for all youngsters!
ON SALE JAN. 21 AT YOUR NEWSSTAND

House ad for the 324-page square-bound giant Gift Comics that appeared in Master Comics #24 as well as other Fawcett titles released to the stands in the early months of 1942.

The No-Fly Zone

When the superheroes started making a comeback in the late 1950s and early 1960s the other publishers had learned their lessons. Lou Nizer (according to one of the witnesses for the prosecution at the trial, Joe Simon, in his memoir *The Comic Book Makers*) had made as one of the centerpieces of his case that Superman and Captain Marvel were alike because they could both fly unaided under their own power. Accordingly, other publishers became leery of wingless flying superheroes. None of the Marvel heroes of the sixties, for example, could just jump off the ground and fly. Some got around in the air because they had wings on their back or their ankles, or because they had boot jets or belt jets; other swung through the air on a cable or on synthetic spider webbing; but none of them had that magical power of flight that Superman and Captain Marvel shared. Similarly, Jules Feiffer mentions in his anthology *The Great Comic Book Heroes* an industry legend that publishers avoided giving their characters capes because that was Superman's legal territory; few of the Marvel heroes of the sixties had capes. Almost none of them had a name ending in "man," and when they did it was usually distinguished from Superman's name by being hyphenated, like "Spider-Man" and "Ant-Man" or two separate words, like "Iron Man."

Still, if people shied away from imitating the litigious Superman, characters who weren't being published anymore were fair game. Take The Mighty Thor, for example. There has been a lot of disagreement over whether the Marvel characters were really created by writer Stan Lee or artist Jack Kirby; but in the case of Thor, it seems that, far from being a primal brainstorm of either, he was a reworking of a Captain Marvel spin-off. Remember Capt. Marvel Jr.? When a newsboy named Freddy Freeman who walked with a crutch was mortally injured, Captain Marvel had given a portion of his power to save him from death. The newsboy became a hero in his own right; just as Billy Batson changed into Captain Marvel when he said the name of the wizard who gave him powers, Freddy changed into Captain Marvel Jr. when he said "Captain Marvel." As with his mentor, a magic thunderbolt flashed down to transform him into a hero with the power of the ancient Greek gods.

Marvel's Thor wasn't all that different. His alter ego was a lame doctor who walked with a cane, and when he stamped the cane on the ground he was transformed with a blinding flash into the Norse god of thunder, Thor. No magic word involved, but the rest of the concept—lameness, thunder and lightning, physical transformation and the power of mythical deities—was the same. Like the Marvel Family, Thor was strong, fast and invulnerable, and he could even fly after a fashion, hurling his hammer through the air and trailing along in back of it by holding onto a thong attached to its handle. Of course, Marvel Comics was no stranger to recycling no-longer-published characters; Reed Richards and Sue Storm of the Fantastic Four took their powers from Quality Comics' defunct Plastic Man and the old

comic strip The Invisible Scarlett O'Neill, and Daredevil borrowed his name from Charles Biro's old superhero. As Stan Lee always used to say, anyone can come up with an idea; it's what you do with it that counts.

More Than One Captain Marvel

There was even a Marvel superhero who was actually called Captain Marvel. After the 28 year Fawcett copyright on the name expired in 1968 (and after a competing publisher had put out a very short-lived comic book also called Captain Marvel), Marvel went into print with its own version. This hero at first had nothing in common with the old Fawcett hero except the name; in fact, he was a lot more like Superman. Both came from another planet and had increased strength in Earth's gravity, and they even sounded like relatives; Marvel's real name was Mar-Vell, while Superman's Krypton name was Kal-El, son of Jor-El. But long-time Marvel Family fan Roy Thomas brought the character even more into line with tradition when he came to write the strip. He gave Mar-Vell a new

Also a casualty of the DC Comics lawsuit, Master Comics back-up feature El Carim often featured compelling splash panels. Shown here is a classic opener from March, 1942... in which the Master of Magic defeats death and the hand of fate.

costume that was evocative of the Fawcett hero's, without the cape but with the same predominant red colour scheme and a starburst instead of a lightning bolt on the chest. This Captain Marvel became hooked up with a boy named Rick Jones, who would be transformed into, or rather trade places, with Mar-Vell; he did it by slamming his wristbands together rather than yelling *shazam*, but the principle was the same.

The most interesting effect of Captain Marvel's disappearance, however, was on Superman. As the '50s flowed into the '60s, Superman became more and more like Captain Marvel.

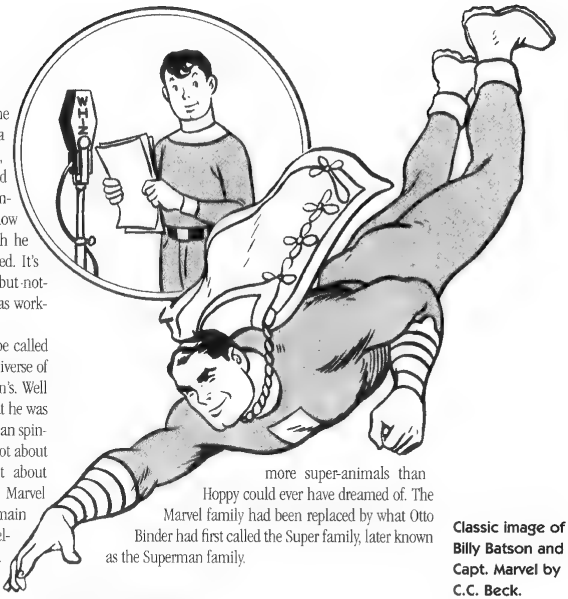
Perhaps it happened because of the creative staff. Over time, a number of the old Captain Marvel people came to work on Superman and its spin-offs. After all, what better experience could National ask for? Writer William Woolfolk began scripting Superman even before Captain Marvel stopped publishing. Kurt Schaffenberger, an old Captain Marvel artist, wound up drawing Lois Lane's comic book, where he snuck a background cameo of the Big Red Cheese into a story at least once (in "The Monkey's Paw," *Lois Lane* #42, July 1963, p.1). Otto Binder (rhymes with "cinder" and "hinder"), the head writer on the Fawcett books, wound up writing Superman. Pete Costanza, another Captain Marvel artist and C.C. Beck's regular inker, eventually became the artist on Jimmy Olsen's book, apparently on Binder's recommendation. For a while it seemed that the only one missing was C.C. Beck, who was busy operating a restaurant called the Ukelele Cafe in Florida and doing commercial art. He would come back to doing the odd comic book story only sporadically, for other publishers, and never drew Superman.

The greatest form of flattery

The most amazing example of imitation was Superman's cousin, Supergirl. She made her debut in 1959, a few years after the Marvels stopped publication, and she was almost a dead ringer for Mary Marvel, in both her costume and her origin. It's hard to get indignant about the similarities, though, since after all her origin story was written by Mary Marvel's creator, Otto Binder. Who had a better right to help Mary live on in a new guise?

Mary Marvel had been Billy Batson's long-lost sister. The Batsons had had two children, but after their death their old nurse had substituted Mary for the dead baby of the wealthy Bromfield family so that Mary would have a good home rather than being raised as an orphan. Billy was unaware of her existence until the two of them met as contestants on a quiz show, and realized that they each had matching halves of a locket their parents had given them. Mary discovered that, like Billy, she would be transformed into a superhero when she said "shazam." But rather than turning into a fully grown woman, in the way that Captain Marvel was an adult, she stayed a young girl. Her costume was a feminine version of Captain Marvel's, with a skirt and bare legs instead of the Captain's full-length pants. She appeared in *Wow*, her own comic book, and with the other Marvels in the *Marvel Family*.

Like Mary, Supergirl was a younger-looking version of her super-relative, with a costume identical to his except that she had a skirt and bare legs instead of pants, and she was billed in her first story as a new member of the "Super family." Just as Mary was the Captain's long-lost sister, Supergirl was the cousin

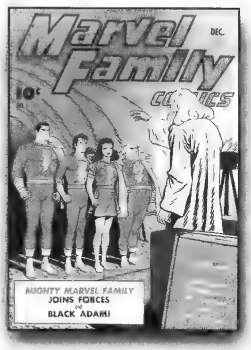


Classic image of Billy Batson and Capt. Marvel by C.C. Beck.

Superman never knew he had, and he promised when he finally found her that he would take care of her like a big brother. She was a young girl rather than an adult, just as Mary stayed a young girl after she yelled "Shazam," and notwithstanding all the extra plot complications Binder had to go through to explain how Superman could have a younger cousin even though he had been only a baby when his home planet exploded. It's impossible to believe that Binder didn't have his gone-but-not-forgotten creation in the back of his head when he was working on the origin of Supergirl.

Supergirl was only the tip of what was coming to be called "The Superman Family" of characters; Superman's universe of super characters was becoming as large as the Captain's. Well into the 1950's, it was part of the Superman legend that he was the sole survivor of the planet Krypton; the only Superman spin-off was a series of stories about Superboy, which were not about a new character but rather stories set in the past about Superman as a teenager. By contrast, the extended Marvel Family had included a lot more than just the three main cheeses. There was also Uncle Marvel, a likable, big-bellied fraud who hung out with Mary and only pretended to have super-powers; whenever challenged to actually use them, he claimed he couldn't because his "Shazambago" was acting up. There were three Lieutenant Marvels. There was a super-villain called Black Adam, who had also been given Marvel powers by Shazam. Mary had a non-super powered friend who dressed up in costume and called herself Freckles Marvel. And there was even a funny animal spin-off called Hoppy, the Marvel Bunny.

All of the Fawcett Marvels went into retirement in 1953; but by the early '60's the newly named "Superman Family" of comics had adopted the spin-off fever. Krypto the Super Dog had made his debut in 1955, as a companion to Superboy; and, after Supergirl, there came Streaky the Supercat, Beppo the Supermonkey, and Comet the Superhorse, who all occasionally banded together with Krypto in the Legion of Super-pets. The phantom zone, a parallel dimension to which all of Krypton's major criminals had been sentenced, was discovered, unleashing a wave of super-powered criminals. Supergirl's super-parents were discovered to still be alive. A miniature Kryptonian city called Kandor, filled with miniaturized Kryptonians, was discovered. Where throughout the '40s and most of the '50s, Superman had been the sole survivor of the planet Krypton, now there were more super-people than there ever were Marvels, and more super-animals than Hoppy could ever have dreamed of. The Marvel family had been replaced by what Otto Binder had first called the Super family, later known as the Superman family.



The author suggests the concept of the Superman Family was actually based on the Marvel Family. Shown here is the cover of Marvel Family Comics #1 (Dec 1945).

Worms & Tigers

The Superman stories also moved closer to the Marvels in tone and subject matter. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the old Captain Marvel had always been whimsy. Superman had his humorous side, and in the early stories would make a lot of wisecracks, but the writers and artists mostly seemed to take him seriously. Captain Marvel was different. His stories had a wilder, more ridiculous tone, so much so that Jules Feiffer in his *The Great Comic Book Heroes* recalls that as a child he had the vague feeling that Captain Marvel was making fun of him. Partly, it was due to C.C. Beck's drawing style.

Beck could make even the straightest superhero script look funny and charming. And the scripts often met and matched him. There was Uncle Marvel and his Shazambago. There was Talky Tawney, the talking tiger with a flamboyant taste in suits and ties who became one of Billy's and Captain Marvel's best friends, and who was always abashed when people ran away from him. And Mr. Mind, the arch-villain from another planet who, it was discovered several episodes after he was first introduced, was really a tiny green caterpillar-like worm with glasses. He had a loudspeaker that looked like an old-fashioned radio dangling on a cord from his neck, magnifying his voice so normal sized people could hear him.

One story that offended Feiffer involved Billy "being turned into a baby by mad scientist Dr. Sivana and thus not being able

to say the magic word, it coming out 'Tha-tham!'" You could also mention the story of Dr. Sivana's good inventions—all the life saving and miracle working devices that he turned out by accident while trying to invent evil machinery, and which he hid away as his darkest, most shamefully embarrassing secret. Or the story of how "Captain Marvel Battles The Giant Earth Dreamer." Dick Lupoff in *All in Color For a Dime* describes it as starting off this way: "a nutty professor tells Billy Batson that he has discovered the universe is nothing but the figment of a dreaming giant's subconscious—and the giant is about to wake up!"

In the '60s, Superman's stories seemed to develop that kind of sense of humour, even if they never seemed quite as good-natured as Captain Marvel. There was Bizarro, a clumsy quartz-faced duplicate of Superman who had been first introduced in the '50s as a tragic take on Frankenstein, and who came to be played for laughs in the '60s. There came to be a whole civilization of Bizarros, living on a cube shaped planet (fashioned that way for them by Superman) and doing everything backwards to Earth folk; they even got their own short lived series. Or take the story where Lois Lane went back in time to Krypton to prevent it from exploding, carrying along a pair of anti-gravity boots to help her get around in Krypton's heavy gravity and a teach-yourself-Kryptonese book that she studied in the time machine during the trip. She became stranded there, met up with Superman's parents Jor-El and Lara before they were married, became Lara's roommate while pretending to be a Kryptonian girl, and succeeded in stealing Jor-El's affections from Lara before she was able to fix the time machine and return to Earth. Then there was the story where Catwoman succeeded in transforming Superman into a black cat and he lived as a pet in Lois' apartment, communicating with her by typing out messages on her typewriter until a way was found to change him.

Along with a wilder sense of humour, Captain Marvel had a wider scope for its stories. Although Superman came from outer space, his stories were usually earthbound, and centered around Metropolis, the fictional city that Joe Shuster had patterned after Toronto, Ontario. It was Captain Marvel who would most often be found traveling through time and outer space and other dimensions, visiting the Greek gods or the Rock of Eternity, hurtling back to the sinking of Atlantis or into the far future. Scriptwriters Otto Binder and Manly Wade Wellman had written pulp science fiction before turning to comics, and they brought a lot of that feel to their stories. Later, in the '50s and '60s, when Binder and fellow science fiction writer Edmond Hamilton were doing the stories on Superman along with the returning Jerry Siegel, Superman came to have the same galactic scope, flying through space to other planets and civilizations, traveling faster than the speed of light to break the time barrier and journeying to the past and future.

Did all these changes come about because Superman's writers were trying to imitate the defunct Captain Marvel? Some, particularly the introduction of the Superman Family, probably did. Others, such as the change in tone to more humurous and more galactic adventures, seem to have been part of the times, and were echoed in the books of other publishers. Otto Binder had hung out with Superman editor Mort Weisinger when they were both teenage science fiction fans, before there even was a Captain Marvel, and his being hired to write Superman probably had more to do with that than with his experience writing the Captain's adventures. But, whatever their cause, the changes did happen.

Until John Byrne came along.

Back to the original

National DC decided to rewrite the histories of most of their major characters in the mid-'80s, starting from scratch if you will. John Byrne was in charge of doing it for Superman. He deliberately tried to go back to the original Siegel and Shuster take on the character, stripping him of the additions to the legend that had accumulated over fifty years. In the process, he stripped him of the features that distinguished him from all the superhero imitations that had come along since. This Superman had little sense of humour, a quality of which he had been displaying less and less in any event, and was much more Earth centered. Supergirl died in the "Crisis on Infinite Earths," and in the new continuity that arose out of that series was deemed to have never even existed. This Superman, in short, was stripped of everything he had learned from Captain Marvel. Meanwhile, National has revived Captain Marvel from time to time, but the recent incarnations all seem to have lost their spirit, turning the Big Red Cheese (in this author's opinion) into just another superhero. Now, Captain Marvel really does seem like a Superman imitation, while Superman seems less like Captain Marvel than ever. Perhaps, after the way he exerted so much influence over Superman in the '60s, it's only fitting.

MARVELOUS PRICES

WHIZ COMICS

While Golden Age comics generally have expensive price tags, many Whiz Comics remain amazingly undervalued. Issues #41-155 in GD still guide at less than $30! (Below are listed the GD and FN prices from the *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* #27.)

#2 (#3 inside)	$400	$1,200
#3 (#4 inside)	$288	$862
#4 (#5 inside)	$237	$712
#5	$200	$600
#6-10	$106	$318
#11-14	$106	$318
#15-18	$115	$346
#19-20	$73	$219
#21	$78	$234
#22-24	$60	$181
#25	$450	$1,350
#26-30	$53	$159
#31-32	$45	$136
#33	$53	$159
#34	$40	$120
#35	$42	$126
#36 40	$40	$120
#41-50	$28	$84
#51-60	$25	$75
#61-70	$22	$66
#71	$20	$60
#72-76	$21	$62
#77-80	$20	$60
#81-99	$20	$60
#100	$24	$71
#101-152	$19	$58
#153-155	$70	$280

View hundreds of high grade items on our website:

www.viabuys.com

VIA vintage investment associates

Contact Jason Ewert, VP Purchasing/Sales:
P.O. Box 354 Eastpointe, MI 48021
E-Mail: help@viabuys.com

We gladly accept credit cards!

Or, for a complete list of our inventory, phone us toll free:

1 888 VIABUYS

or FAX us:

201-689-1490

Action #38
VF/NM $1500

Action
23 PR $295
29 FR $195

Adventure
35 FR/PR $215
47 VG $795
73 FR $1050
210 FR $260
290 VF/NM $195

AA Men of War
20 NM- $300

All Star
1 PR $990
8 G/VG $4500

All Winners
2 FR $400
14 VF+ $1200

All-Flash
1 FR $1050

All-Select
9 G+ $220

Beyond
13 VF/VF+ $85
14 VF+ $90

Black Terror
13 VF/NM $495

Human Torch #8
VF+ $4000

Captain America
6 VF/NM $6800
11 G/VG $620
12 VG+ $875
19 VF+ $2450
27 VG+ $525
28 G+ $395
28 FR $225
32 FR $175
45 G/VG $290
54 FN $495
58 NM $2400

Catman
21 G $195
23 PR $60

Detective
10 VG/FN $3100
19 FR $795
35 App. VG $1300
38 PR $1795
38 App. G/VG ... $3500
40 FR+ $595
140 PR/FR $310
225 VG $1750
227 VF/VF+ $550
357 VF+ $52

DD Battles Hitler
1 PR/FR $890

Dime
1 VG- $250

Strange Tales #110
"Western Penn."
NM $4950

Fantastic Four
1 NM-'Cert.' $24,500
1 App.VF+ $9750
11 NM- $725
15 VF+ $295
16 NM- $375
17 VF+ $350
18 VF+ $350
19 NM- $395
21 VF+ $195
22 VF+ $175
23 NM- $195
24 NM- $225
26 NM- $650
28 NM- $385
30 VF+ $165
31 VF+ $165
32 VF+ $165

Fighting Yank
3 G+ $100
9 VG+ $130
12VG+ $150
13 VF/NM $475

Flash (S.A & G.A)
7 FR $350
14 FR/G $210
24 FR $160
24 VG- $375
47 PR/FR $75
130 VF/NM $165
142 VF+ $90
153 VF+ $60

TOS #39
"Bethlehem"
NM $7500

Frontier Fighters
5 NM- $375

Frontier Western
9 VF+ $100

Funny Picture Stories
Vol. 1, #1 FN $1600

Funny Stuff
12 VF/NM $155

Green Hornet
36 VF/NM $450
41 NM- $325
42 VF $200

Green Lantern
16 VF+ $160
21 VF+ $140
24 VF+ $140
25 VF+ $150
26 VF/NM $140
33 VF/NM $120
35 NM $160
41 VF/NM $80
42 NM $100
50 NM- $95
54 VF/NM $65
60 VF/NM $42

Hello Pal
1 VF+ $450
3 VF+ $375

Whiz #2 (#1)
PR $6500

Strange Tales
All 'West Penn'
105 VF+ $295
106 NM $295
111 NM $750
113 VF+ $150
116 NM- $225
118 NM- $165
126 NM- $150

Tales of Suspense
All 'West Penn'
40 NM $2700
42 NM- $600
43 NM- $600
44 NM- $475
46 NM- $375
47 NM- $350
49 VF+ $275
50 NM $375
51 NM- $225
53 NM- $295
54 VF+ $115
55 NM- $225
56 NM $225
57 NM- $325
59 VF+ $495
63 NM- $295
68 NM $150
77 VF+ $60
78 NM $100
80 NM- $120
81 VF+ $60
83 NM- $75

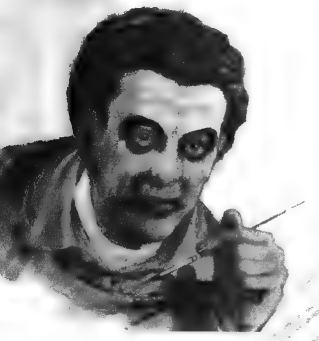
VIA is always buying

entire collections or individual books printed before 1972.

In his visual creation of Captain Marvel Jr. Mac Raboy produced the greatest images of dynamic motion in comic books. His cover runs on both **Master Comics** and **Captain Marvel Jr.** from 1942 through 1944 will never be equaled. The concept of a teenager who becomes super allowed Raboy to portray a character who finds great joy in possessing paranormal powers.

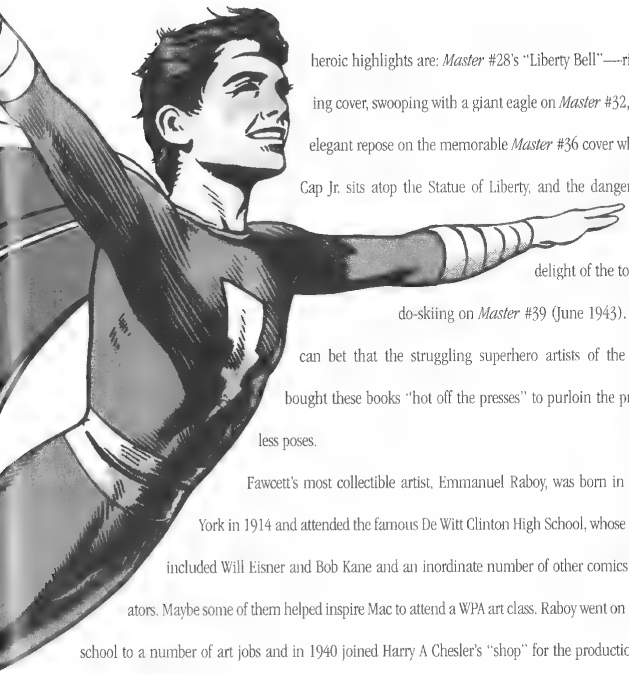
Mac Raboy's...

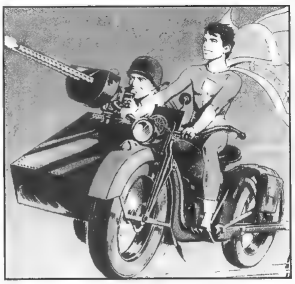
BY PAT S. CALHOUN



The wonderful cover of *Captain Marvel Jr.* #17 (March 1944), with the world's mightiest boy flying next to a rocket ship, is a superb imagining of what it would be like to soar through the air. The ecstasy on Cap Jr.'s face reinforces—through empathy—the thrill of the flight. Raboy gave the youthful superhero a slender understated frame and obtained his effects with perfect positioning and posturing rather than straining sinews. Super strength and grim determination are showcased on the bomb-throwing cover for *Master* #26 (May 1942), and among the other

The recently rendered likeness of the great Mac Raboy (facing page, by an unknown artist) as the Golden Age artist appeared during the early to mid 1940s.





heroic highlights are: *Master* #28's "Liberty Bell"—ringing cover, swooping with a giant eagle on *Master* #32, the elegant repose on the memorable *Master* #36 cover where Cap Jr. sits atop the Statue of Liberty, and the dangerous delight of the torpedo-skiing on *Master* #39 (June 1943). You can bet that the struggling superhero artists of the day bought these books "hot off the presses" to purloin the priceless poses.

Fawcett's most collectible artist, Emmanuel Raboy, was born in New York in 1914 and attended the famous De Witt Clinton High School, whose rolls included Will Eisner and Bob Kane and an inordinate number of other comics creators. Maybe some of them helped inspire Mac to attend a WPA art class. Raboy went on after school to a number of art jobs and in 1940 joined Harry A Chesler's "shop" for the production of comic book stories and art. Raboy drew in a style influenced by his favorite comic strip artist, Alex Raymond, whose Flash Gordon set a standard for a high romantic fantasy art of delicate linework and lushly-rendered figures.

Chesler prepared much of the material published in Fawcett's comics, and Mac's work on Dr. Voodoo and Bulletman caught the attention of Fawcett editor Ed Herron. When Herron came up with the idea of a super boy he sent the script to Raboy. Herron was a key figure in building the Marvel Family; he had penned some of the early Captain Marvel stories in *Whiz*, and after becoming an editor he groomed writer Otto Binder as a Marvel scribe.

Flying Boy!

Cap Jr.'s debut trilogy begins in *Master* #21 (December 1941) where Captain Marvel guest stars with Bulletman (shown together on Raboy's first Fawcett cover) to battle against the Axis supervillain Captain Nazi. Part Two is in *Whiz* #25 (December 1941) where Captain Marvel rescues a drowning boy—left to die by Captain Nazi, who killed the boy's father and broke the child's back after they mistakenly aided him. Cap takes the boy to Shazam who grants the lad a magic word that gives him the Marvel powers, and then they send him back to *Master* Comics, where in issue #22 (January 1942) he teams up with Bulletman against Captain Nazi and then starts his own series in *Master* #23 (February 1942).

No one ever looked happier blasting their super body through an Nazi tank than the world's mightiest boy on the cover of Captain Marvel Jr. #12 (Oct 1943), drawn by Mac Raboy.

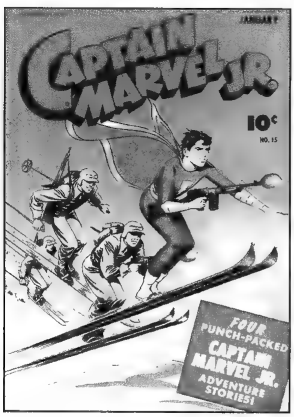
Since Cap Jr. first appeared in the *Whiz* episode the Fawcett people went so far as to arrange to have Raboy draw the new character while C. C. Beck illustrated the rest of the strip. The series quickly became a hit, and Cap Jr. continued to headline in *Master* every month along with receiving his own monthly title, with #1 dated December 1942. That same month Captain Nazi returned in *Master* #34—whose cover featured an awesome aerial duel between the super boy and the super fiend.

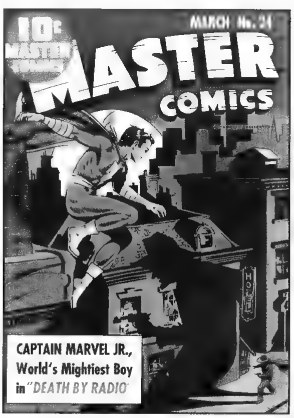
Captain Marvel Jr. was the first young superhero to be "spun off" of his elder self and also one of the most popular, appearing in three regular titles (once *Marvel Family* began in 1945) and a host of annuals, giants, and specials. The regular titles all ran through 1953 when Fawcett quit publishing comics, at least partially as a result of their long losing legal battle with DC over Captain Marvel's infringement on Superman's copyright.

The WWII "sport" of machine gun skiing is demonstrated on the cover of Captain Marvel Jr. #15 (Jan 1944).

Mac Raboy produced his work slowly and was assigned assistants to cope with the rising workload. Raboy's run was coincident with the peak of World War II, so many of the covers are stunning examples of patriotic propaganda, like Cap Jr. smashing a huge stone swastika (*Master* #33), the super boy saluting Old Glory (*Master* #40), and even straightarming Hitler on the football field as "Capt. Marvel Jr. carries the ball for Democracy" on *Captain Marvel Jr.* #13.

In 1944 Raboy left Fawcett with Ken Crossen and illustrated his *Green Lama* comic for eight issues. In 1948 things came full circle, and Raboy won the assignment of the *Flash Gordon* Sunday page, a job he kept working at for twenty years, until his death in 1967.





Looking back at Mac's career, it is the highly collectible Raboy cover runs on the *Master* and *Captain Marvel Jr.* that unquestionably mark his greatest contribution to comic art. The exuberance of the character and the cleanly convincing rendering of a variety of well-staged super feats was a perfect marriage of concept and artist. And Mac Raboy's definitive drawings of Captain Marvel Jr. in flight helped millions of young readers vicariously share the boy hero's extraordinary abilities and exhilaration—propelled by the power of imagination.

The full moon frames Captain Marvel Jr. hanging from a rooftop chimney, ready to pounce on his villainous prey on the gorgeous and moody "noir" cover of Master #24 (Mar 1942).

QUALITY **AUCTIONS SINCE 1985** **CONSISTENCY**

QUASAR COMICS

presents

FANTASTIC MAIL BID SALE #21!

COMICS, SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY, PULPS, BIG LITTLE BOOKS, ORIGINAL ART, FANZINES, COLLECTIBLES

☑ QUALITY

A wide selection of accurately described and attributed comics and collectibles from the Golden-Age to the Modern-Age are offered for all collecting preferences.

☑ CONSISTENCY

Mail bid and phone auctions on a regular basis for 11 years.

Accurate conservative grading that stays the same year-in and year-out.

☑ INTEGRITY

Founding Member: *American Association of Comic Book Collectors (A.A.C.C.).*

Member: *A.A.C.C. Authenticity, Certification and Grading Committee, Sotheby's Auctions, New York, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996.*

Winner: *Comic Buyers' Guide Customer Service Award.*

Advisor(Present/Past) to: *Overstreet; Comic Book Marketplace; Comic Buyers' Guide Price Guide; Comics' Source*

☑ SATISFACTION

Over 14,000 lots sold in previous auctions. ***less than one-third of one percent returned*** *for any reason.*

We frequently receive letters of thanks and appreciation from our customers world-wide.

Seven-day return privilege. We pay your return postage costs.

Ninety-day interest free lay-away plan.

☑ CONVENIENCE

For your convenience, we accept MasterCard and Visa. We also offer an interest free ninety-day lay-away plan for purchases greater than $100.

☑ CONSIGNMENTS

Our seller's consignment fee never exceeds 20% and can be as low as 10%. We do not charge a buyer's fee. Single books valued $50 and up as well as some lots of less expensive books are accepted on a space available basis. ***Please call or write for details before sending any books.***

HERE'S A FEW OF THE 1300+ LOTS IN FANTASTIC MAIL BID SALE #22! ~

- Adventure #300; Atom #1; **Batman #6, 34, 50, 60, 75, 84**, 171, 200; Flash #111, 113, 114, 122; Hawkman #2; **JLA #1**, 22; Showcase #32, 60; Spectre #1; **World's Finest #44, 66** and many more G.A. & S.A. D.C.!
- Lots of **Golden-Age, Fifties**, Esoteric, Romance, War Comics!
- **Amazing Spider-Man #14**, 28; **Fantastic Four #3**, 25, 49; Silver Surfer #1, 4; **Strange Tales #101, 114**; Tales of Suspense #41, 42; **X-Men #3** and many more nice S.A. Marvels, Atlas and a few Timelys too!
- **Vampirella** (Warren) magazines including #1, 3 and the Annual!
- **Original Art:** Al Williamson, Gray Morrow; Mark Schulze, Kevin Eastman and more!
- **Original Fillmore West** posters!
- Nice run of **Web of Mystery** comics and more horror!
- **John Wayne** & other Westerns!
- Stacks of 1970s and newer Marvels, DC, Image, etc etc!!
- **Disney Comics:** Large runs including hard to find late Gold Key issues, Barks, etc!
- Assorted **Big Little Books!**
- Early comic/sci-fi **Fanzines!**
- Science Fiction, Fantasy and Comic related books of all kinds!
- Piles of Gold Key and Dell
- A plethora of T.V. /movie comics

OUR PHILOSOPHY:

We believe a book is worth what some one will willingly pay for it. That's why our auctions have no minimum bids. You will find plenty of stuff sold for 40% to 60% of guide while the truly hot stuff might bring over guide. We are not a "high society" auction house with "buyer's fees" and ridiculous minimum bids, nor do we have unrealistic or hidden "reserves". We want you to be happy with your purchase. We are glad to offer inexpensive books and lots in our auctions. We know not everyone can afford to participate in extravagant auctions. We want your bidding experience to be exciting, fun, fair and enjoyable!

Anticipated mailing date for catalog is November 27, 1997

Send $1.00 for your copy of the auction catalog to:

QUASAR COMICS

Bruce W. Edwards, Proprietor

P.O. Box 2227, Louisville, KY 40201-2227

E-mail: Quasarcmx@AOL.COM

WEB: HTTP://WWW.COMICS2000.COM/QUASAR/

Phone: (502) 451-4852 - Fax (502) 454-0025

INTEGRITY **SATISFACTION**

Announcing the publication of **"The Argosy Price Guide First Historical Edition"**

Quasar Graphics is proud to present the first edition of the rare 1965 *Argosy Comic Book Price Guide* in 32 years. Although relatively obscure, *The Argosy* holds the distinction of being the first known comic book price guide (not dealer price list)! Only four copies of the original edition are known to exist. The new expanded edition features the entire original work plus an introduction by comic fandom historian **Bill Schelly**, an excellent retrospective and insight into the making of the guide by the original creators **Michael Cohen and Tom Horsky** and a forward by Bruce Edwards. This edition also contains reproductions of the two known advertisements for *The Argosy* and the covers to the *RBCC* issues that featured the advertisements!

Available now in two editions: The regular edition can be yours for $5.00 postpaid or the deluxe signed and numbered edition of 200, autographed by Michael Cohen and Tom Horsky and printed on premium paper can be yours for $10.00 postpaid.

Order from: Quasar Graphics, P.O. Box 2227, Louisville, KY 40201-2227. *Quantity wholesale rates available on request.*

FAWCETT

BY NICKY WRIGHT

"Billy Batson, his sister Mary, and their friend Freddy Freeman have been endowed with amazing powers by an ancient Egyptian wizard named Shazam. When Billy and Mary say 'Shazam' and when Freddy says 'Captain Marvel' a thunderous blast of magic lightning crashes down to Earth, changing them into the powerful Marvel Family! The mighty Marvels are impervious to harm and wage a ceaseless war against evil in order that good may triumph! Read their incredible adventures in the pages of *Whiz* and *Master* every month!"

—FAWCETT PUBLICATIONS, 1943

A recent rendition of the Marvel Family by artist and fan, Alex Ross.

...MORE THAN JUST THE MARVEL FAMILY!

Whenever a crowd of comic book aficionados mention Fawcett, thoughts immediately-instinctively-turn to *Captain Marvel, Whiz Comics, Captain Marvel Jr.* and the *Marvel Family*. The Big Red Cheese was immensely popular, even outselling Superman for a time. (Superman, of course, got his revenge after taking the irreverent Cap to court claiming infringement of copyright, unfair competition, and copying.) This, I'm afraid to say, was sour grapes on Superman's part... for Captain Marvel was completely different in every way. Almost all Captain Marvel's adventures were tongue-in-cheek humor while Superman tended to be more serious and attempted a more realistic storyline. I shall not pursue this 12 year long legal wrangle save to say Fawcett eventually threw in the towel. However, it might be worth noting Dick Tracy didn't sue Rip Kirby, both were detectives though entirely different....

Yes, Captain Marvel and his happy family were Fawcett's flagship flotilla, the brilliant creations of C.C. Beck, Otto Binder, Bill Parker, Ed Herron, Mac Raboy and others. Millions upon millions of youngsters derived great pleasure from the Marvels' innocent whimsy, and some even carried the Marvel torch into reality. Elvis Presley for instance. He adored Captain Marvel Jr., styling his hair like his slender hero, and later mimicking his cape for the Las Vegas crowd.

Fawcett wasn't only the Marvels; they had other worthy craft as well. There was Spy Smasher, Captain Midnight, the wonderful Bulletman, Minuteman. popular radio star Don Winslow of the Navy, later, TV's *Captain Video,* and a host of western movie heroes beginning with Tom Mix, Hopalong Cassidy, Rocky Lane, and Lash LaRue.

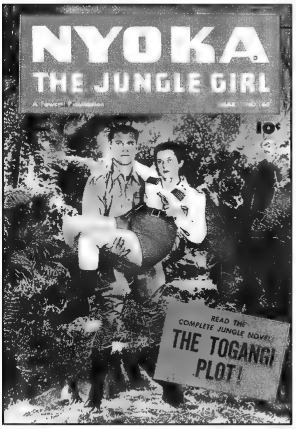
IN THE BEGINNING

It all began when wily entrepreneur, Wilfred (known as Billy) Fawcett came out with a humor magazine entitled *Captain Billy's Whiz Bang*. The "Whiz Bang," was an artillary shell from WWI. Fawcett picked the name as he wished to dedicate his humor magazine to the armed forces where Fawcett had found many of the funny anecdotes contained therein.

Old Billy hadn't expected *Whiz Bang* to take off the way it did. Beginning as a local magazine with a print run of 5,000 in Fawcett's home town of Minneapolis, *Captain Billy's Whiz Bang* proved so popular it was selling 500,000 copies a month, nationwide within six months. Shortly after came *Mechanic Illustrated*, movie magazines, and romance titles. Captain Billy was now a publisher of considerable merit.

In 1933, M.C. Gaines published the first "standard format" comic book. It was sold to various stores to be given away as premiums. It was called *Famous Funnies* and reprinted various newspaper strips. Gaines struck gold; by May 1934 *Famous Funnies* became the first monthly comic book sold on newsstands for 10¢. Then

comic books featuring original art and stories began to appear shortly thereafter culminating in *Action Comics* #1... starring the most unlikely of heroes, a fellow in blue tights and red cape. Superman had arrived; eventually his influence would circumnavigate the globe to become the absolute leader of costumed fantasy fare.



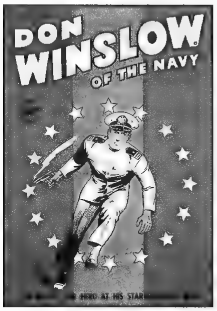
Even though the covers looked staged and the models posed... Nyoka, The Jungle Girl sold well for Fawcett right up until the company stopped publishing comic books in 1953. The issue above (#65, Mar 1952) is an example of the now highly sought after photo covers which appeared periodically throughout the run.

Fawcett Publications decided to join the fray with first entry, *Whiz Comics*, cover dated February 1940. No doubt the title was borrowed and abridged from *Captain Billy's Whiz Bang* magazine. (Captain Marvel remained the star of the title to the bitter end... until June 1953.) Less than a year after the premiere of *Whiz*, Captain Marvel had his own book which was so incredibly popular that it spawned a family of superheroes, superheroines, and even super animals.

Captain Marvel hit the bullseye; immediately appealing to children who could identify with his make-believe world. Billy Batson, boy radio newscaster, said the magic word "Shazam!" and became Captain Marvel (the hero patterned after the likeness of film actor Fred McMurray).

The great Captain Marvel was more humorous and cartoony than Superman, and had a phenomenal cast of unforgettable supporting characters including the evil Dr. Sivana, Mr. Mind (the villainous worm), Tawky Tawny (the talking tiger), Mr. Morris (WHIZ Station Manager), and of course, the ancient Shazam himself.

Though Captain Marvel could have kept Fawcett in business on his own there were plenty of other costumed heroes as well. Like Spy Smasher, Captain Midnight, Ibis the Invincible and Bulletman (along with the delectable Bulletgirl). Bulletman first appeared in May 1940 as one of the strips in *Nickel Comics*. Shortly after he began a run in *Master Comics*, then graduated to his own title in the Summer of 1940.



Don Winslow Of The Navy (#55, Mar 1948; shown) still used patriotic theme covers long-after WWII ended.

A BULLET SHAPED HELMET

Bulletman was Jim Barr who became an orphan when his father (a police sergeant), was killed by a gang of bad guys. Young Jim vowed to exact revenge by fighting crime when he was older. Interested in chemicals, Jim worked hard to find a drug that would eliminate from peoples' minds the desire to become criminals. He didn't find it, of course, but during his research he concocted a drug that turned him into a muscle bound fighting machine. Jim was almost ready to wage war on crime, but not before he perfected a bullet shaped helmet called a Gravity Regulator, which enabled him to fly. Donning skin tight garb (the favorite attire of all superheroes) and shiny boots, Bulletman set forth in his quest to give criminals the once-over.

Bulletman became quite a favorite among young readers, especially when he gave his potion to the police chief's daughter, Susan Kent. Also endowed with the same powers, Susan looked decidedly sexy in her matching Bulletgirl costume. When compared to the exquisite Mac Raboy art on the first few covers of *Bulletman* (#1-3, 5, 6, 10), and in several issues of *Master Comics*, the illustrations in later issues were so-so. Nevertheless Bulletman lasted for 15 issues of his own comic, and remained in *Master Comics* until issue #106.

Besides Captain Marvel, *Whiz Comics* also introduced Spy Smasher, Ibis, Golden Arrow and a slew of other heroes in its first issue. After the World's Mightiest Mortal, Spy Smasher was easily the best, and in 1941 was given his own comic which lasted 11 issues, until 1943.

Drawn with more attention to realism than Captain Marvel, C.C. Beck and Pete Costanza illustrated Spy Smasher with obvious relish. Issues #5-7 sported Mac Raboy's distinctive work as did several of the covers. The artwork alone made Spy Smasher one of Fawcett's most memorable heroes.

Spy Smasher wasn't a superhero. He did wear a green leather pilot's helmet, skin tight green costume with a red diamond emblazoned upon his chest, and a long red cape... in much the same manner as the outfits of the invulnerable heroes with which he co-starred. Being a wartime fighting ace, Spy Smasher handed out his fair share of punishment to the Axis powers, and in one issue, was even rumored to have killed Hitler!

Unlike Spy Smasher whose title went under after 11 issues (he continued in *Whiz* until issue #76 when he became Crime Smasher), Captain Midnight was given his own comic in September 1942. It continued until issue #67 in 1948. The *Captain Midnight* series was especially distinctive because of the imaginative and beautiful covers. Unfortunately the red garbed flyer wasn't served so well between the covers where the artwork was second rate at best. Still, Midnight flew around the skies zapping Nazis and Japs with aplomb, and after the war, turned his attention to crooks. Unlike most Fawcett heroes, Captain Midnight did have a sidekick Sergeant Twilight, who provided humorous interludes in the otherwise serious tales. But if you want some glorious covers, snap up a few *Captain Midnights*.

IBIS & WINSLOW

Along with superheroes, many comic book publishers also had a penchant for magicians in the early days. Fawcett's entry into the field of prestidigitation was Ibis, a character a little different from all the Mandrake clones of the day. Ibis, who originated in Egypt, was encased as a mummy for 4,000 years in a deep, enchanted sleep. He had put himself into this state after his beloved and beautiful Princess Taia was struck by an arrow fired by the evil Black Pharaoh. (Perhaps this Egyptian princess theme was inspired by the classic 1933 Universal film "The Mummy" starring Boris Karloff.) Instead of dying, Taia fell into a magic snooze that would last 4,000 years. Ibis came upon the scene, dispatched the Black Pharaoh with a swift sword thrust, and commanded his magic wand, the Ibistick, to put him into the same state. So here he was, 40 centuries later, in a museum alongside Princess Taia. Naturally he raised Princess Taia, and together they had many exciting adventures in the pages of *Whiz Comics* and in Ibis' own title. There were only six issues of *Ibis*, published sporadically between 1943 and 1948, but the magical pair survived in *Whiz* for its entire run.

In fact, all the *Whiz* characters had their own titles for short runs. Lance O'Casey and the Golden Arrow had 10 issues between them but were not much to write home about. At this time Fawcett relied mostly on *Captain Marvel, Captain Marvel, Jr.*, *Whiz* and *Master Comics* for profits, and very fat profits at that. One wartime comic which spanned nearly the entire Fawcett course (1943-1955), was radio's popular naval star, Don Winslow. Captain Marvel introduced Winslow on the cover of the first issue which was efficiently drawn by John Jordan and Carl Pfeufer.

Don Winslow was quite the sophisticate in his adventures which he shared with slightly overweight sidekick Red Pennington. (From time to time Winslow even referred to Red as "fat boy.") A navy commander, Winslow believed in the stiff-upper-lip-approach to his adventures with little of the violence many of his contemporaries employed. Occasionally there was a degree of nastiness like the page of brutal torture meted out to Winslow and Pennington by the Japanese, in *Don Winslow* #24. It was rather bloodthirsty stuff for a company that "enlisted the aid of distinguished individuals…." to help Fawcett, in its own words "maintain high standards of wholesome entertainment."

ENDORSING FAWCETT

Which, by and large, Fawcett did. In the early years, anyway. To achieve public acceptance, Fawcett went the DC route by having well-known individuals or child psychiatrists/psychologists endorse its comics. DC kept the same team until the Comics Code Authority came into being, then dropped it altogether, but Fawcett either made changes or lost endorsers. Certainly Fawcett scored with the good folk it enlisted: I mean, you couldn't get much better than the First Lady of the Land (Eleanor Roosevelt), the man who brought the Canadian quintuplets into the world (Dr. Dafoe), or the explorer, aviator and author who discovered the North Pole (Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd). All were part of Fawcett's "Editorial Advisory Board" for a time. Other respected names included "Consulting Editor" Sidonie M. Gruenberg (Director of the Child Study Association of America), and Professor H. W. Zorbaugh (Director of the Clinic for Gifted Children, New York University). These and many more kept tabs on what Fawcett published for the innocents of America to read.

Whether any of these individuals actually bothered to look at the comic books they were endorsing, is debatable. Whether they were paid or donations given to charities they supported, I don't know. I do postulate that the advisory board members at both DC and Fawcett surely got something for their endorsement, but I doubt whether the likes of Eleanor B. Roosevelt accepted money; more likely a donation to the Girl Scouts or the like.

Anyway, I doubt whether they bothered to look at the comics (thinking them "nice children's fare") until the growing ground swell of criticism against the comics grew very loud. It is doubtful whether Mrs. Roosevelt cared for scenes of torture, whippings, and wholesale slaughter that were endemic in some Fawcett tales… Minute Man, the star-spangled one man army; who ran for three issues of his own comic and was a long-time resident of *Master Comics*… comes to mind… as does Spy Smasher. Of course the horrible evils were all perpetrated by the villainous Nazis and Japs, even so, it was likely too extreme for the First Lady's sensibilities as she stopped being part of the advisory board. It was the same with the rest of the advisory team because in the end they all disappeared from the list, leaving W. H. Fawcett Jr. endorsing his own publications.

A close-up of the cover of The Marvel Family #68 (British Edition, published by L. Miller & Son LTD., London) featuring "The Million Year War."

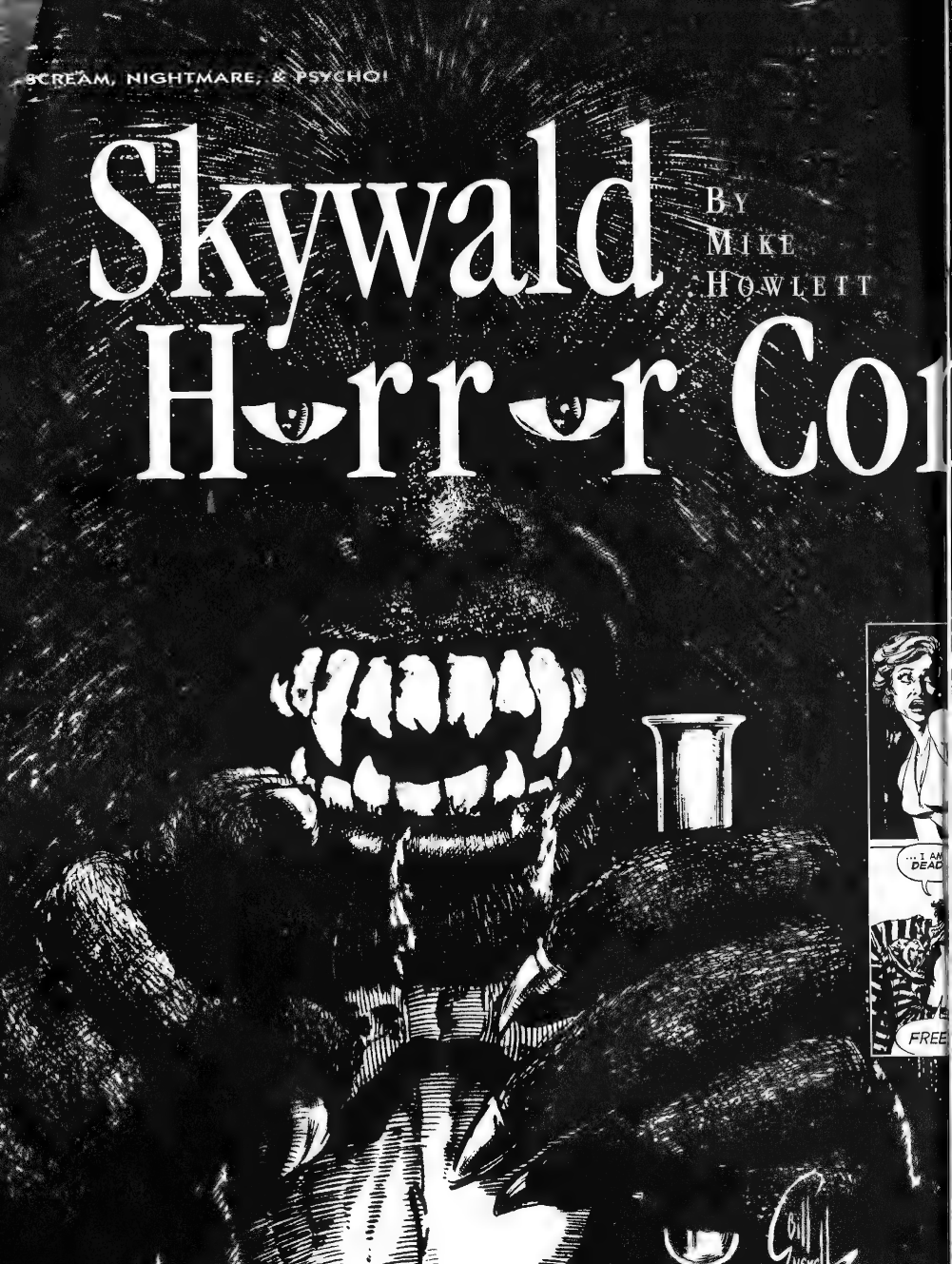
RECORD CIRCULATION

After World War II ended so did the adventures of numerous Fawcett superheroes. They had been made redundant with no Nazis or sons of Nippon to swing a fist at. To stay in business the comics industry had to adapt, bring out different comic magazines. Of course good old Captain Marvel continued as popular as ever; issue #51 dated January 1946, hit a record circulation of 1,384,000. A figure that must have caused gnashing of teeth over at DC.

Continued on page 68

Skywald Horror Co

By Mike Howlett



mics

"THIS IS DISGUSTING!" RANTED MY FATHER AS HE SLAMmed down one of our comic books on a cold morning in early 1972. Of the hundreds of comic books that my siblings and I had laying around the house, bad luck caused my Dad to pick up my new copy of *Psycho* #11 for his morning "bathroom read."

I have always been a horror nut. (I still am!) Other comics were fine, but my hard earned allowance was always spent on the horror/mystery comics: *House of Mystery, Unexpected, Creepy, Eerie* and others. But until now, none of the comics we owned had elicited this kind of response from Dad. And if Dad was disgusted by them, my fevered little brain reasoned that the line of Skywald comics had to be the best! And so began my interest in these obscure, offbeat, and "horrible" horror comics.

I later learned that Skywald Publishing was formed in 1970 by Sol Brodsky and Israel Waldman, the name coming from a combination of their surnames (BrodSKY and WALDman). Their intention was to publish black and white comic magazines to compete with Warren's successful line of horror titles. Brodsky was no stranger to comic magazines, having been the founding editor of *MAD* look-alike *Cracked* in 1958. Skywald was a very small company who also published some four color jungle comics and westerns, including three issues of Butch Cassidy in 1971. At 52 pages each, these were padded with reprints, but also featured some interesting Reed Crandall art.

But it was their black and white horror magazines, sister titles *Nightmare* and *Psycho*, and later *Scream*, that were the company's life's blood until their demise in 1975. They were, particularly in the mid to later years, one of the most reader friendly and distinctive publishers of their time. They also featured some of the best stories and art by the most gifted creators you've never heard of!

Cover dated just a month apart, *Nightmare* #1 (December 1970) and *Psycho* #1 (January 1971) hit America's newsstands in the Autumn of 1970 and alternated monthly for about a year. These early issues were pretty good imitations of Warren's horror line, sprinkling in a few old reprints among new stories and art. The stable of creators was certainly impressive! Don Heck, Syd Shores, Grey Morrow, Ross Andru, Jack Katz, Dick Ayers, Jack Abel, Ralph Reese and many other fine artists rendering the stories of Marv Wolfman, Gardner Fox, Jerry Siegel and Len

--WHAT IS GOING ON--
...AND FRANKLY, MY DEAR--
--I DON'T GIVE-A-DAMN!
BAAHH!
OH MY GOD
...GOOD LORD!
...NO...
...BUT YEW CAN'T BURY ME IN THET PRISON... I GOTTA BE FREE ...FREE...
...BUT... BUT... BUT...
...YOU MUST FIGURE OUT A WAY TO GET ME OUT OF THET PLACE!! YOU GOTTA CREEP... YO'R THE WRITER...
...BURY ME...

This disturbing and little-known Werewolf "pin-up" was rendered by the legendary Bill Everett and originally appeared on the back cover of Psycho #6 (May 1972).

The Human Gargoyles was Skywald's most popular series due in large part to Maelo Cintron's dynamic artwork.

In one of Skywald's more surreal horror stories, a rotting corpse searches for a "proper" burial in Nightmare #12 (Apr 1973).

Wein! The great Bill Everett did a series of pin-ups and, in *Psycho* #3 (May 1971), illustrated Gardner Fox's "The Man Who Stole Eternity," a glorious 10-pager (which was later reprinted in the 1974 *Psycho Yearbook*). If that line-up isn't enough, how about some covers by Boris Vallejo and Jeff Jones?! *Nightmare* #6 (December 1971) not only has a beautiful Jeff Jones cover, but inside has a short interview with the artist. This issue also has a Jerry Siegel/Carlos Garzon story "The Living Gargoyle," that looks like it might have served as inspiration for some of Skywald's more popular characters to come.

Scream's "The Saga of the Victims" (drawn by Suso) was laced with violence, horror, and sex appeal.

In *Psycho* #2 (March 1971), Skywald dredged up from the past, a character that the cover blurb says is "the most exciting character in years!" That character was The Heap, a walking pile of sludge last seen in Hillman's *Airboy Comics* in the 1940s. His new stories were popular with the readers and his exploits continued well into *Psycho*'s run.

The Heap even garnered his own self-titled color comic in September 1971. This, like Skywald's color westerns, was a 52-page giant, 17 pages of which told a new Heap story written by Bob Kanigher and illustrated by Tom Sutton and Jack Abel. The issue was rounded out with some 1950's fantasy reprints by E. R. Kinstler and A. C. Hollingsworth! Not bad for a quarter, but apparently the color comics buyers weren't impressed, as this was the title's single issue, and Skywald's only attempt at color horror.

Of course The Heap wasn't the only creature with "the mind of a man in a body of earth matter" who was stalking the comics racks of the early 1970s… but it should be noted that The Heap's first (re) appearance in *Psycho* #2 was cover dated March 1971, while DC's *House of Secrets* #92 (first appearance of Swamp Thing) was dated June/July of the same year.

In 1971, Skywald launched a couple of other black and white comic magazines: *Crime Machine* and *Hell-Rider*. *Crime Machine* lasted for only two issues (February 1971 and May 1971) and sported violent, bloody covers and pre-code reprints (and a handful of new stories) hosted by the hard-boiled Matt Grover. Hell-Rider was Brick Reese, a motorcycle riding superhero created by Gary Friedrich, with artwork by Rich Buckler and Grey Morrow. This title also lasted for only two issues (August 1971 and October 1971). Although a third issue was announced (and even advertised), it failed to materialize. Too bad, as it was to feature a nice Grey Morrow cover painting of *Hell-Rider* being attacked by lions!

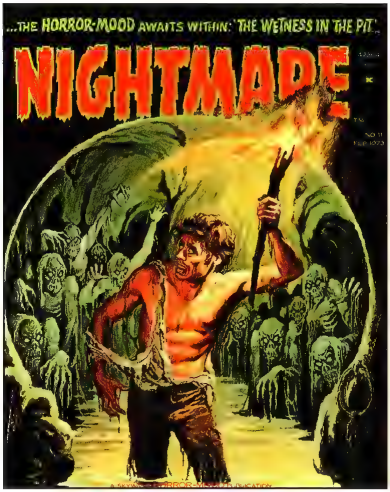
From *Nightmare* #6 (December 1971) until *Psycho* #6 (May 1972), Skywald went on hiatus to do a little retooling. There was a definite change in the air. Comics veteran Alan Hewetson (Stan Lee's former assistant editor at Marvel, among other things) had been contributing scripts since *Nightmare* #3. One of Skywald's most talented and evocative writers, he was so prolific that he was asked by his editor to adopt three pen names!

Heap #1 (Sep 1971), Skywald's only 4-color venture, resurrected the title character from Hilman's Airboy Comics.

By *Psycho* #7 (July 1972) he was made Associate Editor, and two months later, upon Brodsky's departure, the whole editorship of Skywald's magazine line was his. Hewetson's influence had become more and more evident, but once he was in control, the magazines took on a unique charm and a flavor all their own. Gone were many of the

(Continued on page 65)

The unpublished Tomb of Horror became Nightmare #12 (Oct 1974), and Scream #8 (Aug 1974) by FABA.



AN OOZING, ATMOSPHERIC COVER by JAD begins the fun in **Nightmare** #11 (Feb 1973, above).

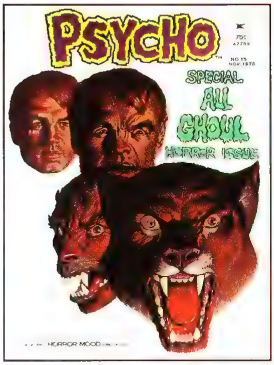
SIMULTANEOUSLY PROVOCATIVE AND FRIGHTENING, JAD's amazing cover on **Nightmare** #18 (Apr 1974, below) ensured reader attention at the newsstand.

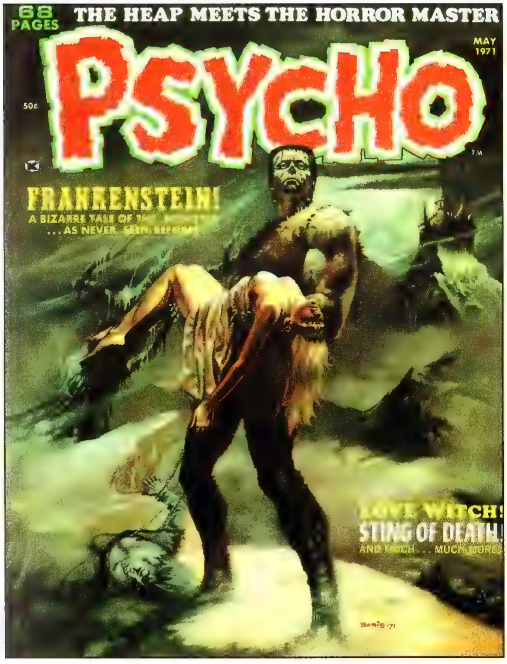
SEGRELLES' HIGH-IMPACT cover on **Nightmare** #13 (Jun 1973, above) scared the wits out of many a Bronze Age fan!

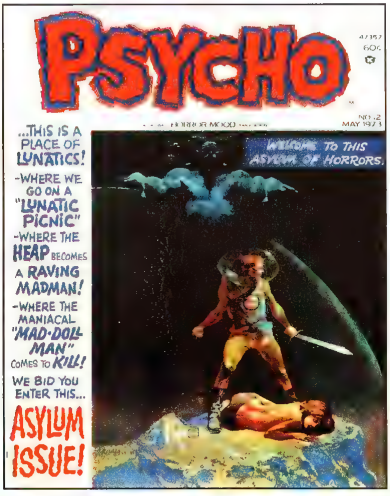
THE PREMATURE BURIAL the first of many Edgar Allen Poe adaptations, was one of the horror highlights in **Nightmare** #12 (Apr 1973, left).

MAN-INTO-BEAST white-background cover by Segrelles on **Psycho** #15 (Nov 1973, right) starts off the Special All Ghoul Horror Issue.

SATAN CLAWS IS COMING TO TOWN Segrelles' painted horrific holiday cover on **Nightmare** #23 (Feb 1975, far right), scared the pants off young fans...and for obvious reasons. Issue #23 was the last issue of the title.






PSYCHO
...THIS IS A PLACE OF LUNATICS!
-WHERE WE GO ON A "LUNATIC PICNIC"
-WHERE THE HEAP BECOMES A RAVING MADMAN!
-WHERE THE MANIACAL "MAD-DOLL MAN" COMES TO KILL!
WE BID YOU ENTER THIS...
ASYLUM ISSUE!
WELCOME TO THIS ASYLUM OF HORRORS.

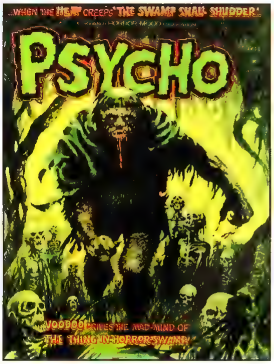
SCIENCE FICTION ODYSSEY was never published but its gorgeous and compelling outer space fantasy cover by Jeff Jones was used on **Psycho** #12 (May 1973).

BIZARRE TALES OF FRANKENSTEIN is the subject of Boris Vallejo's painting on **Psycho** #3 (May 1971, left).

SCREAM joined Nightmare and Psycho with its debut issue dated August, 1973. (Cover by Segrelles).

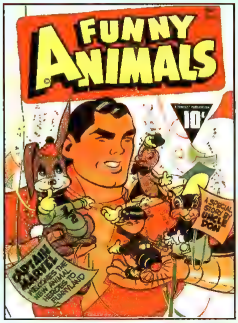
PSYCHO GOT OFF TO A HEADY START (Jan 1971) with its "mind-staggering" melted flesh cover.

MORE PAGES! MORE MIND-STAGGERING TALES OF THE BIZAR
PSYCHO
JANUARY
1971
THE SKIN AND BONES SYNDROME!
A DEFORMED CHANCE OF LIFE - OR DEATH!



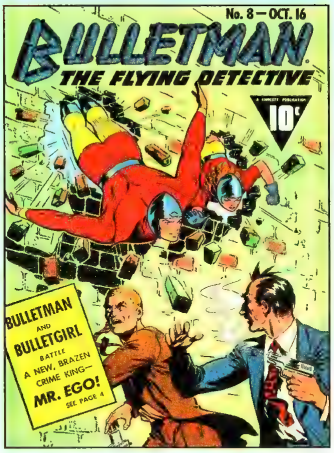
DOUBLE DOSE OF E. A. POE plus Oscar Wilde's "Picture of Dorian Gray" are the treasures inside **Scream** #5 (Apr 1974, cover by Fernando, above).

GRIZZLY AND SHOCKING the cover of **Psycho** #11 (Mar 1973, cover by Fernando, left) still packs a wallop 24 years after it was originally published.



Captain Marvel introduced the first issue of Fawcett's **Funny Animals** (Dec 1942).

Mary Marvel becomes the star of **Wow Comics** beginning with issue #9 (Jan 6, 1943).



Even a solid brick wall is no obstacle to Bulletman and Bulletgirl as they corner hirelings of the vicious "Freudian" villain Mr. Ego on the cover of **Bulletman** #8 (Oct 16, 1942).

Because **Master Comics** #23 usually gets all the attention, Raboy's elegant and beautiful composition on the cover of #24 (Mar 1942) is often overlooked by collectors.

Highly sought after since the beginning of fandom, Master #23 (Feb 1942) remains one of the all-time classic covers of the Golden Age.

Captain Midnight searches the Arctic on the cover of #48 (British Edition, early 1950s).

Watch out for the witch doctor's zombie... on **Worlds Of Fear** #3 (Mar 1952).

The Marvel Family fought The Flying Skull, The Red Vulture, and a giant bat creature on **MF #71** (May 1952).

The Marvel Family
A Fawcett Publication
NO. 71
10¢
MAY
WHAT IS THE TERRIBLE ANSWER TO THE SECRET OF
GHOST ISLAND?
CAN THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST FAMILY SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF THE SUPERNATURAL?

FAWCETT CLASSICS PLUS ONE

Among the most beautiful covers of the run, #17 (Mar 1944) is a Raboy masterpiece.

The cover of **Capt. Marvel Jr.** #115 (Nov 1952) reflects the popularity of horror comics during the early 1950s.

Raboy's Bulletman seems to fly right off the cover of **Master Comics** #19 (Oct 1941).

The Shazam Girl's second cover appearance on **Wow Comics** (#10; Feb 10, 1943).

Mac Raboy took a break from drawing the "Little Blue Cheese" and turned out this **Dynamic Comic**'s cover (#9, May 1944) for Harry Chesler. This was Raboy's only cover for Chesler Publishing Company.

The Flag, the Fuhrer, and Fawcett funnybooks are the subject matters for these three Captain Marvel Jr. covers. Raboy's flag cover for **Master** #40 (Jul 1944) combines beauty and strong feeling into a breathtaking patriotic statement. Also shown are **Master** #29 (Aug 1943) one of the greatest WWII propaganda covers of the Golden Age, and **Captain Marvel Jr.** #37 (Apr 1946) with its highly collectible "newsstand" cover.

HEY, KIDS, LOOK!
STATUETTES OF YOUR FAVORITE COMIC CHARACTER HEROES
Statues Manufactured by
R. W. KERR CO.
PLASTIC MOLDERS & FABRICATORS
HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
CHARACTERS COPYRIGHT 1946 FAWCETT PUBLICATIONS, INC.
BOYS! GIRLS! HERE'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR! LIFELIKE PLASTIC MODELS OF THE FAMOUS MARVEL FAMILY!
IN REALISTIC COLORS
ALL PLASTIC COMIC CHARACTER STATUETTES
START YOUR COLLECTION TODAY!
BE THE FIRST IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD TO OWN A COMPLETE SET OF THE
FAMOUS MARVEL STATUETTES

TOP: Captain Marvel graphic from the Fawcett Statuettes store sign marketing the R.W. Kerr Co. plastic figurines (1946, only six known, art by C.C. Beck, $5,000 in VF); ABOVE RIGHT: the four plastic statuettes from 1946 (Mint values: CM $5,300, Jr. $3,250, Mary $3,200, Bunny $4,000); MIDDLE RIGHT: Front of box used to package plastic statuettes (type 3, one statuette per box); MIDDLE LEFT: Back of box ($750). Box graphics by C.C. Beck.

(TRIO L TO R): Capt. Marvel Jr. type 2 (1946, $2,675); Capt. Marvel type 1 (1945 Syroco, $8,250); Mary Marvel type 2a (yellow lightning bolt,$2,500).

By Ron Menchine

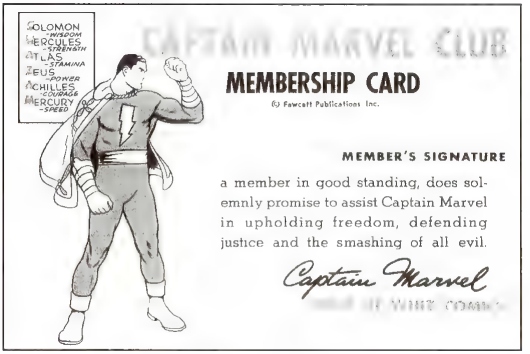
Fawcett Figurines!

Most collectors know the story.

Whiz Comics—created and brilliantly drawn by artist C. C. Beck—gained immense and immediate popularity and Fawcett Publishing had an immediate winner in Captain Marvel. Literally overnight, millions of readers began following his often humorous adventures.

What many don't know is that Fawcett decided to capitalize on Captain Marvel's fame by creating a club. The club was introduced by an ad in *Whiz* #23 (October 31, 1941), inviting youngsters to join. "Send only 5¢ with your name and address to Captain Marvel, c/o Fawcett Publishing, 22 Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, Connecticut." For that nickel, you received a tin lithographed button with Captain Marvel's picture along with a membership card containing a special code. More than a million took advantage of this offer.

The Captain Marvel Club Membership Card (1940s) issued as part of the Captain Marvel Fan Club ($150).



From that time through 1943, club members could obtain many fine premium items available only to them, such as photos, letters, felt emblems, Christmas cards, neckties, and even war bond stamp book envelopes.

World War II was in full swing during this period, so helping the Allies win the war was America's top priority as well as Captain Marvel's. Consequently, because of a shortage in materials, Captain Marvel Club premiums were of the paper variety. The best premiums as well as the club's heyday (1944-47) were still ahead.

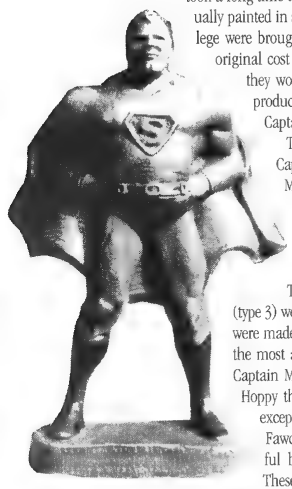
By 1944, it became obvious the Allies would defeat the Axis powers and win the war. Many American companies were looking for ways to switch over from war products to peacetime wares. Multi Products Co. was one such company.

Comic strips were enjoying tremendous popularity during this period and King Features Syndicate had many of the best-loved. King Features got together with Multi Products and the result was a series of 24 Syroco (pressed wood) statuettes featuring the most famous comic characters in the King Features stable.

Syroco is quite fragile, so many have not survived the 50 odd years since they were issued in 1944. In most instances, the women command a higher price than the men because they had extremely thin ankles and were easily broken. These statuettes originally cost a quarter plus one box top from any Pillsbury Enriched Farina product.

The King Features statuettes caught the eyes of the Fawcett Brothers, who were constantly on the lookout for quality premiums for Captain Marvel Club Members. In 1945, they placed ads in three of their comics (*Captain Marvel, Whiz*, and *Wow*) informing club members they could obtain a Syroco statuette of Captain Marvel for a coupon plus 5¢. An initial order of 2,000 was placed with Multi Products Co. When the shipment arrived, the Fawcetts were extremely disappointed with the appearance of the statuettes. They didn't look anything like Captain Marvel. These early "ugly" versions have become known as Captain Marvel type 1, now valued at $8,250.

Meanwhile, the R.W. Kerr Co. of Hastings, Nebraska, which had manufactured small vehicle parts during World War II, began retooling in order to switch back to commercial ventures. One of its first peacetime projects was a life-like statuette of the comic strip character Alley Oop. Duly impressed with the work, the Fawcetts decided to have Kerr tackle the Captain Marvel project. However, this time they would wait until orders began coming in before having them produced. Using a unique concoction of Syroco, plaster of paris, and plastic, Kerr's figurines (known as type 2) were aesthetically much more attractive. In addition to looking better than type 1, the type 2 Captain Marvel can be easily recognized. The word "Captain" is spelled out on the base of type 1, but abbreviated "Capt" on type 2.



Fully painted Superman Syrocos bring $4K. There is a standing offer of $10K for the ash-tray version.
BELOW: Side of the plastic statuette box featuring the Marvel Family logo.

Unfortunately, Kerr's type 2 Captain Marvel had serious problems, too. Paint did not adhere well to the figurines and it took a long time to dry. Thus each figurine had to be individually painted in stages. In fact, art students from a local college were brought in to complete the project. Whereas the original cost was supposed to be 12¢ for each figurine, they wound up costing $1.05 each. Only 500 were produced in addition to 500 of Marvel and 500 of Captain Marvel Jr.

Type type 2 Captain Marvel's are worth $8,250, Captain Marvel Jr. sells for $2,675, and Mary Marvel brings $2,800. A rarer second, "dark-haired" version of the type 2 Mary brings $3,600. Not bad for something that cost Captain Marvel Club members 50¢ and a club coupon 50 years ago.

The third group of Captain Marvel statuettes (type 3) were also manufactured by R.W. Kerr, but these were made entirely of plastic and in many respects are the most attractive. There were four pieces in the set: Captain Marvel, Captain Marvel Jr., Mary Marvel and Hoppy the Marvel Bunny. All are 6 1/2 inches high except the Bunny, which stands 5 1/2 inches. Fawcett ordered 1,000 sets, which came in beautiful boxes designed by Marvel artist C.C. Beck. These figurines sold for $1.95 each, but trouble continued to plague the ill-fated project. Each piece was hand-done from a single mold providing exceptional detail and quality. However, when the 1,000 sets arrived at Fawcett, more than 50 percent were broken. Fawcett, of course, did not reorder because of the high mortality rate. Most of the damage occurred with the capes and the Bunny's ears. Only 21 Bunnys are known to currently exist, most with ears broken. The plastic Captain Marvel type 3 sells for $5,300, Captain Marvel Jr. brings $3,250 and Mary Marvel $3,200, and Hoppy the Marvel Bunny (ears intact) goes for $4,000. All prices are for the figurines only, in near mint condition. The boxes are currently selling for about $750. (Only one collector, Harry Matetsky of New York, is known to have all of the Marvel statuettes of types 1, 2 and 3.)

A Syroco Superman figure preceded Captain Marvel by four or five years. Around 1941, DC Comics decided to promote its superhero by presenting Superman gifts to people in the comics market, such as major distributors. Approximately 100 Syroco statuettes were produced, 25 of which were fully painted in the regular blue costume. All of the others were only partially painted. In addition, five ashtrays were made, but since Syroco is pressed wood, they were dangerous to use in this form. Today, the fully painted statuettes bring $4,000 while the partially painted ones bring $3,000 or more. As for the ashtray with the identical Superman figure, there is a standing offer of $10,000 for one.

There is a dark side to the hobby that must be addressed here. Prior to a 1992 show in Baltimore, an unnamed dealer sold several Superman "Syrocos" for more than $1,000 a piece, claiming them to be originals of a warehouse find. They were extremely good fakes, but as the originals were made of Syroco and these were made of plaster of paris, the counterfeits were discernible by scraping the bottom of the base.

Collectors who purchased the bogus figurines got together in Baltimore to validate they had indeed purchased reproductions. When confronted that the statuettes were fakes, the dealer agreed to give everyone their money back, promising not to sell any in the future in exchange for no charges being brought.

Additionally, the legal department at Warner Brothers (which holds the copyright to all DC Comic-related titles, logos, and characters) has made it known to all that they will vigorously prosecute any further counterfeiting of products that have not been officially licensed by them.

No Captain Marvel figurines have ever been faked.

Originally published in Collecting Figures *vol. 1 #9 (September, 1995). Reprinted and condensed by permission. (Text updated to reflect current market prices.)*

PANTHER PROTOTYPE!

CONTRIBUTED BY JOHN PLAUCHE

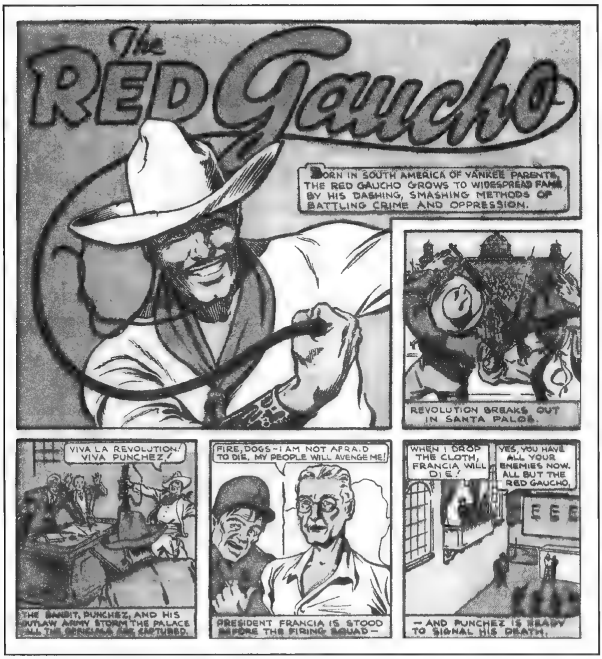
What do you think of when Silver Age Marvel pre-hero prototype comics are mentioned? Is it *Strange Tales* #83, the Magneto prototype, or maybe *Tales Of Suspense* #32, the Dr. Strange prototype. It might even be *Journey Into Mystery* #73, the Spider-Man Prototype (and that one's a reach). Well, there is a new prototype "kid" on the block... *Two Gun Kid* #77, the Black Panther prototype!

As most Marvel collectors will tell you, the first Black Panther appearance was in *Fantastic Four* #52 (July 1966). This great little yarn was created by the world famous team of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. But ten months previous to *FF* #52, Marvel published *Two Gun Kid* #77 (September 1965) which featured the introduction of a minor villain simply called the Panther. The creators of this early incarnation were Al Hartley and Dick Ayers, with Stan Lee editing and Dick Ayers doing the pencils. Ayers had already inked Jack Kirby on many marvel masterpieces including the wonderful and highly sought-after pre-hero monster books and famous Marvel key *Fantastic Four* #1. Hence, a creative connection between *Fantastic Four* #52 and *Two Gun Kid* #77 does exist.

One question often asked by newer collectors "Is *Two Gun Kid* #77 a prototype or the actual first appearance of the Black Panther?" At first glance, the cover suggests that it might be the first appearance, but after reading the story, the answer is clear... it's definitely a prototype. In that story, we find out that the Panther is really Professor Elixir, a white medicine-man turned villain. This characterization is a far cry from the black, Wakandan prince named T'Challa that is the alter ego of the hero incarnation of the Black Panther.

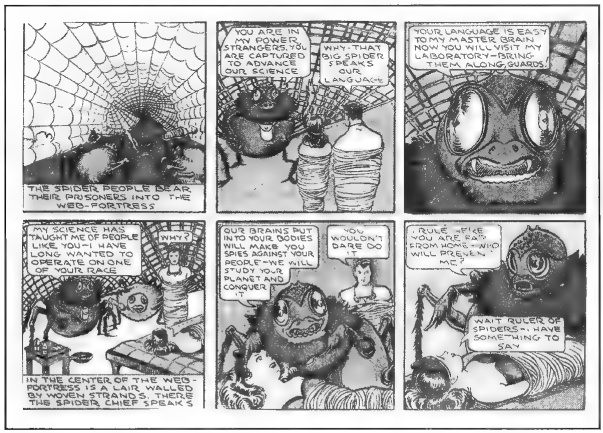
But for Marvel collectors and historians, *Two Gun Kid* #77 is still an interesting and odd addition to the ever expanding prototype list... and is being added to more and more Marvel want lists with each passing year.

NEW ISSUE EVERY OTHER FRIDAY!

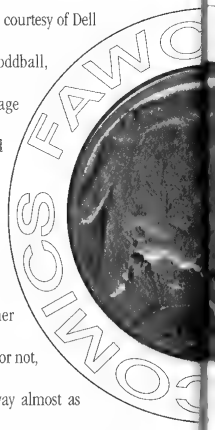

The RED Gaucho
BORN IN SOUTH AMERICA OF YANKEE PARENTS, THE RED GAUCHO GROWS TO WIDESPREAD FAME BY HIS DASHING, SMASHING METHODS OF BATTLING CRIME AND OPPRESSION.
REVOLUTION BREAKS OUT IN SANTA PALOS.
VIVA LA REVOLUTION! VIVA PUNCHEZ!
THE BANDIT, PUNCHEZ, AND HIS OUTLAW ARMY ENTERS THE PALACE AS THE OPPOSING FORCE SURRENDERS.
FIRE, DOGS—I AM NOT AFRAID TO DIE, MY PEOPLE WILL AVENGE ME!
PRESIDENT FRANCIA IS STOOD BEFORE THE FIRING SQUAD—
WHEN I DROP THE CLOTH, FRANCIA WILL DIE!
YES, YOU HAVE ALL YOUR ENEMIES NOW. ALL BUT THE RED GAUCHO.
—AND PUNCHEZ IS READY TO SIGNAL HIS DEATH.

BULL
UNABLE TO PASS FOR PATROLMAN AS AN OBSCURE SECRETLY HE DE JECTS HIMSELF WHICH DESTROY WEAKEN ORDIN GUISED IN A UN NEW-FOUND STRE BULLETMAN, PHA
TODAY AT THREE IS THE TIME. GET THAT DIAMOND SHIPMENT.. AND BE READY FOR BULLETMAN.
...AND ARCH-ENEMY OF BLACKMASK, MYSTERIOUS SUPER-CRIMINAL WHOSE FACE NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN.

Red Gaucho (NC #4), Capt. Venture (NC #5), and Bulletman vs. Blackmask (NC #3).


THE SPIDER PEOPLE DEAR THEIR PRISONERS INTO THE WEB-FORTRESS
YOU ARE IN MY POWER, STRANGERS. YOU ARE CAPTURED TO ADVANCE OUR SCIENCE
WHY—THAT BIG SPIDER SPEAKS OUR LANGUAGE
YOUR LANGUAGE IS EASY TO MY MASTER BRAIN. NOW YOU WILL VISIT MY LABORATORY—BRING THEM ALONG, GUARDS.
MY SCIENCE HAS TAUGHT ME OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU—I HAVE LONG WANTED TO OPERATE ON ONE OF YOUR RACE
WHY?
IN THE CENTER OF THE WEB FORTRESS IS A LAIR WALLED BY WOVEN STRANDS. THERE THE SPIDER'S CHIEF SPEAKS
OUR BRAINS PUT INTO YOUR BODIES WILL MAKE YOU SPIES AGAINST YOUR PEOPLE—WE WILL STUDY YOUR PLANET AND CONQUER
YOU WOULDN'T DARE DO IT
RULE—LIKE YOU ARE FAR FROM HOME—WHO WILL PREVENT ME?
WAIT RULER OF SPIDERS—I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY

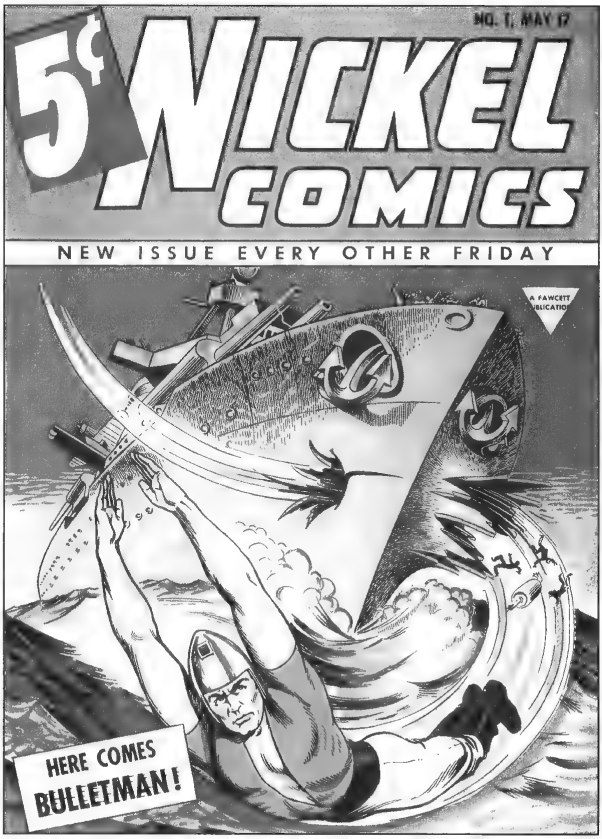
A COMIC BOOK UNDER THE NICKEL LOGO first originated in 1938 courtesy of Dell Publications. This oddball, undersized, 132 page effort of reprints and cartoon strips failed to capitalize upon the burgeoning comic book market. Whether intended as a one shot or not, Dell's *Nickel* faded away almost as quickly as it appeared. However, two years later, the responsibles at Fawcett Publications pushed



The Grand Experiment!

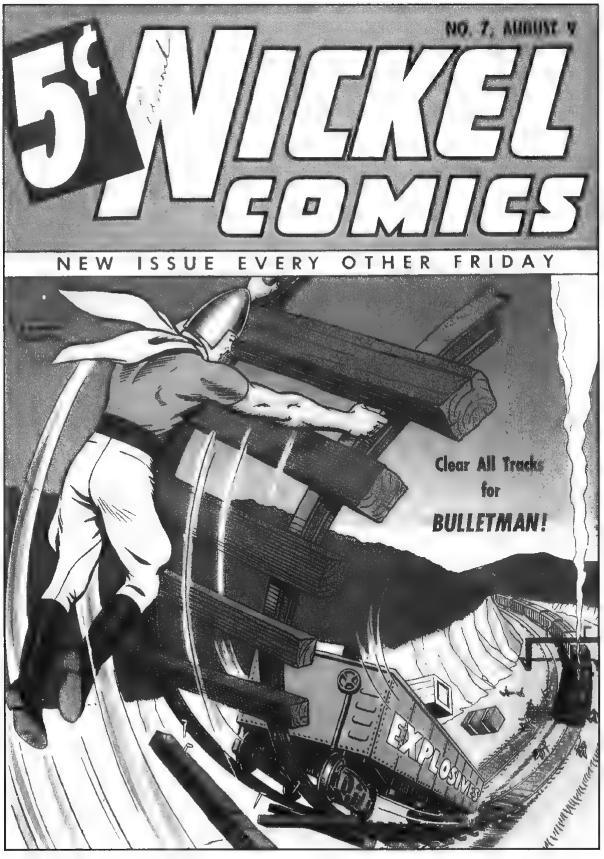
BY STEVE CAREY

forward with a different version of *Nickel*. one that would take its place in comic book history. It was in Fawcett's *Nickel* #1 that the important character Bulletman first appeared. With many of Fawcett's titles currently being overlooked by aficionados playing in today's Golden Age market, it is easy to forget that Bulletman was one of the most unsuccessful superhero creations, ever.



His decade long appearances via titles like *Nickel, Bulletman, Master,* and *America's Greatest* certainly qualify as being noteworthy. It was his first eight appearances, as the headliner in all issues of Fawcett's *Nickel Comics*, that usually arouse the most interest.

A closer look at the landmark title that launched Bulletman reveals that Fawcett apparently thought they had something special (i.e. profitable), something avant-garde, in the idea to publish a 5¢ comic book twice a month. In February 1940, they obtained not one, but two copyrights for their breakthrough concept; surviving ashcan copies of *5 Cent Comics* and *Nickel Comics* testify to Fawcett's serious intentions about the idea. In some ways, these were typical ashcan books, sans illustrated covers, containing black and white interiors that had nothing to do with Bulletman or any other characters intended for the upcoming series.



Bulletman tears-up the tracks on the Larson copy of Nickel Comics #7 (August 9, 1940; cover by C.C. Beck).

With the copyright secured, Fawcett launched *Nickel* #1, with a cover date of May 17, 1940. Sporting a terrific Jack Binder cover of Bulletman plowing through the bow of a battleship, *Nickel* #1 started off with our hero's origin story, and it's a good one. In the opening panel, police sergeant Pat Barr is mortally wounded by a group of ruthless gangsters. On his deathbed, the good sergeant implores his son, Jim, to keep up the Barr tradition by joining the force and fighting crime. Until he becomes old enough to take the law enforcement oath, the orphan Jim Barr studies bullets and their markings, earning himself a scientific reputation.

Unfortunately, the adult Jim proves too weak to pass the police entrance exams, so he instead turns to work in the crime laboratory. Having

labored tirelessly on a serum to eliminate all germs which pollute the human body, Jim injects himself with a test sample—and, after some sleep, Bulletman is born!

Amazed at his newfound strength, and concerned that his discovery might fall into the wrong hands, Jim falsely proclaims the experiment a failure, then destroys the serum (interestingly enough, a year later, two guys named Simon and Kirby would use a variant of a destroyed strength serum to introduce their phenomenal Captain America). Pressed into immediate service by a dynamite-wielding thug, Jim Barr dons his dashing uniform and gravity-regulating helmet to meet the challenge.

After crashing through a wall, Bulletman captures the thug… but our initial story hasn't ended yet. A new menace, who kidnaps cops, is quickly introduced, and more exciting pages follow. After making the rescue, we get a glimpse of the tried-and-true double identity theme so prevalent in the superhero genre; in this case, scientist Jim Barr is hounded to 'identify' his alter ego, Bulletman, to the authorities. Readers would see this apparent conflict permeate most of these early stories.

In issues #2 through #8, Bulletman continued his sweeping adventures by battling nefarious

Warlock the Wizard
WARLOCK THE WIZARD, LAST OF THE WHITE MAGICIANS, SPENDS HIS LIFE FIGHTING EVIL, AIDED BY HIS MAGIC GOLDEN HAND, THE MYSTIC LAMP OF THE GODS AND HIS TALKING RAVEN, HUGIN
WELL, WE'RE ON OUR VACATION AT LAST, HUGIN.
AS HE WATCHES THE CITY'S SKYLINE RECEDE IN THE DISTANCE AND HIS SHIP HEADS FOR THE SOUTH SEAS, WARLOCK HEAVES A SIGH OF RELIEF.
WHAT'S UP, HUGIN?
KARR!
LATER AT SEA, THE WISE RAVEN'S EXCITEMENT BRINGS WARNING OF EVIL LURKING NEARBY.
A COUPLE OF MEN TALKING... IS THAT WHAT YOU MEAN, HUGIN?
RISING, THE WIZARD SILENTLY SLIPS AFTER THE RAVEN AND DISCOVERS TWO DARK FIGURES TALKING IN LOW TONES.
I CAN'T HEAR WHAT THEY'RE SAYING, BUT, OH-H-H!
SUDDENLY A SANDBAG CRASHES DOWN ON WARLOCK'S HEAD.

villains like the recurring Blackmask as well as a crooked politician, a corrupt contractor, an extortionist attorney (known as Lucifer-the Blue Devil), a railroad saboteur, and finally a fraudulent philanthropist.

Warlock the Wizard, aided by his talking Raven, Hugin, spends his life fighting evil. (Panels here from Nickel #5, July 12 1940). Bulletman tries not to "freeze up" but he's still in a tight spot in Nickel Comics #4 (June 28, 1940).

WE'RE GOING TO KILL TANNER RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYES... LIGHT THE FURNACE AND BURN HIM ALIVE. THEN WE'LL PLUG UP YOUR AIR-HOSE AND LET YOU SUFFOCATE, WISE GUY.
UNABLE TO MOVE, BULLETMAN IS FORCED TO WATCH WHILE THE CROOKS PREPARE TO TORTURE TANNER BY LIGHTING THE FURNACE TO WHICH HE IS BOUND.
HELP! HELP! I CAN'T STAND IT!
TANNER WRITHES AND SCREAMS IN AGONY AS THE METAL OF THE FURNACE SLOWLY GROWS HOTTER AND HOTTER, BURNING HIS SKIN.
HOT ANGER FLOODS BULLETMAN AS HE HEARS THE TORTURED MAN'S CRIES. HE CAN'T MOVE HIS LIMBS... BUT IF HE CAN TURN ON THE POWER OF THE GRAVITY HELMET BY PRESSING IT AGAINST THE ICE...
CRASH!
HEY! LOOK AT THAT! PLUG HIM, MIKE!
BULLETMAN SUCCEEDS! THE GRAVITY-HELMET ROCKETS THE BLOCK OF ICE UP TOWARD THE CONCRETE CEILING, AGAINST WHICH IT SMASHES WITH A SHATTERING CRACK!

Despite this parade of seemingly mundane villains, Bulletman's stories were fast-paced and action packed! A lot of credit has to go to the artist, Jon Small, who drew these first eight episodes. Small's stylistic draftsmanship was perfect for the feature, and it's a shame he didn't have a longer tenure on the strip. Small later went on to become a successful stable artist at DC Comics, working on popular features like Batman and Superman. The Bulletman stories themselves are so well scripted, it wouldn't surprise me if cover artist Jack Binder's brother, the extraordinarily prolific Otto Binder, penned the tales in issues #1-4. Jack Binder himself was an unsung hero from the Golden Age, with listed achievements from the early Chesler comics (1937) to characters like Silver Streak and the Destroyer. C. C. Beck, of Captain Marvel fame, contributed the clean covers to *Nickel* #5 through #8.

JUNGLE TWINS
BILL DALE, SEARCHING IN AFRICA FOR HIS LONG-VANISHED TWIN, FINDS STEVE DALE A SAVAGE KING IN THE JUNGLE, CAPTURED BY ARAB SLAVE-TRADERS, BOTH BROTHERS FACE DEATH WHEN A HERD OF ELEPHANTS, STAMPEDE IN THE ELEPHANTS' GRAVEYARD WHERE THEY HAVE WANDERED.
HE'S BROUGHT THE ELEPHANTS DOWN ON US! I'LL KILL HIM!
DON'T SHOOT! HE'S MY BROTHER!
RUN FOR YOUR LIVES! THEY'VE GONE MAD!
THE LEADER OF THE ARABS, ALI BEKR, BRINGS DOWN STEVE WITH A WELL-AIMED BULLET.
LEADERLESS, THE TUSKERS PLUNGE ON, TRUMPETING IN SAVAGE FURY.

Panel from the Jungle Twins (Nickel Comics #3, June 14, 1940).

The first issue of *Nickel* also introduced a magician strip called 'Warlock the Wizard.' By muttering his magic word "Abraxas," the warlock could perform miraculous feats in the tradition of a Mandrake or a Zatara. After hearing "Abraxas" dozens of times over the first seven *Nickel*'s, the warlock disappears into obscurity; he was replaced in #8 by a "Jim Dolan-newspaper editor" story (see Fawcett's *Wow Comics* for further exploits).

To round out the first *Nickel*, we get introduced to the Jungle Twins, a set of separated brothers who have a variety of... you guessed it... jungle adventures. This well-drawn feature would also continue through issue #7; issue #8 had a similar exotic story called the White Rajah (again, see *Wow Comics* #1 for another one-shot appearance of this character).

Nickel #4 is an especially interesting issue as it manages to squeeze in two new features, the 'Red Gaucho' (a Zorro/Whip type South American Robin Hood) and 'Captain Venture and The Planet Princess' (a Buck Rogers clone). These two strips continued through the eighth and final book, then made the jump to *Master Comics* for some more stories, following the Bulletman.

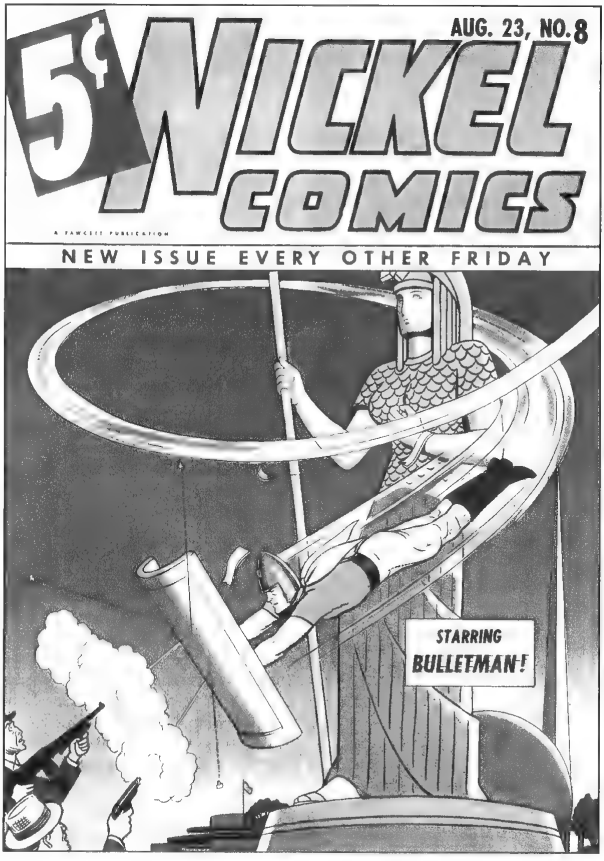
Overall, the back-up features in *Nickel* proved to be interesting companions to the fast-paced Bulletman yarns. What the back-ups lacked in originality, they made up with quick and colorful stories which were rarely boring.

Lasting only four months and eight issues, it would be easy to classify Fawcett's *Nickel Comics*

as an interesting failure .. but I, for one, would disagree with that assessment. Fawcett did try something different by going with a biweekly comic (heck, in the first issue, the enthusiastic editors even queried the readers to see if they wanted a weekly schedule!). At half the page count (32), and half the price (5¢), *Nickel Comics* nonetheless went head-to-head with the 64 page 'big boys' on the newsstands of 1940 America. Perhaps annoying retailers and distributors with the odd schedule, or being unable to keep up with the two week deadlines, or even lack of sales as customers missed out on the frequently appearing books, *Nickel Comics* folded as Fawcett consolidated their comic book empire.

Bulletman would transition over to *Master Comics* #7 to spearhead the format change in that title, and be more in line with the format of Fawcett's successful flagship title, *Whiz Comics*. For my money, *Nickel* managed to cram an amazing amount of content in to 32 pages without the filler fluff of their 64 page brethren. The very first appearance of Bulletman in *Nickel* #1 alone qualifies it as a resounding success. Witness the current *Overstreet Price Guide* which accurately lists *Nickel* #1 as being more valuable than either *Bulletman* #1 (a first issue) or the transitional 7th issue of the long-running *Master Comics*. As the fictional Jim Barr learned that not all laboratory experiments result in perfect and immediate success, Fawcett Publications also found a winding path of glory for their Bulletman creation... and it all started with *Nickel Comics*.

The last issue of Nickel Comics (Aug. 23, 1940) is highly sought after by both comic and 1939 New York World's Fair memorabilia collectors.

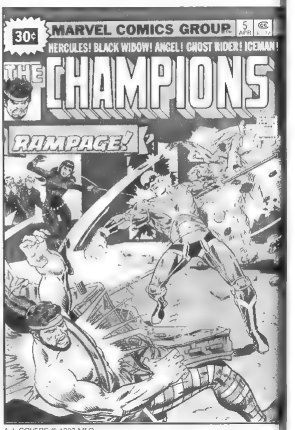


The 30¢ Price Puzzle

Making sense of Bronze Age Marvel Price Variants

PART II

As a result of talking with other collectors and continuing to research 1970s Marvel's, I decided to look for other, earlier variant Marvel comics, and boy am I happy I did! It turns out there are more of them out there, maybe a lot more! But first I would just like to clarify, and add to, a few items from "The 35¢ Price Puzzle" in *CBM* #51. The 1984 Overstreet first mentions under *Daredevil* #148 that "35 cent issue exists," so there are 11 comics and eight different titles with 35¢ variants known to exist. The *Champions, Daredevil,* and the *X-Men* are all bi-monthly titles, not just the *Champions*, so it seems the frequency of issues was not a factor in Marvel's price variant experiments. And although *Marvel Two-In-One* #28 is the earliest 35¢ variant known to exist, it is not the first Marvel Comic with a price variant cover.



ALL COVERS © 1997 MEG

Marvel Comics published from May '74 to August '76 have 25¢ cover prices, with a few intriguing exceptions. In 1980 *Overstreet* first mentions *Eternals* #1 with a 30¢ cover price, and adds that the "Price changed from 25¢ to 30¢ during the run of #1." Then 1983 *Overstreet* notes that *Invaders* #6 has "Two cover prices, 25¢ & 30¢." Next came the 1988 *Overstreet,* which mentions that "25¢ and 30¢ issues of [X-Men] #98 & 99 exist." Then the 1992 *Overstreet* lists *Avengers* #146 and notes that "25 & 30¢ variants exist." *Avengers* #146 and *X-Men* #98, both cover dated April 1976, are the earliest 30¢ cover variants known to exist (*Champions* #5 and *Fantastic Four* #169 now share that honor). The *Overstreet Guide* suggests that *Eternals* #1 has two cover prices because the price went up during printing, but I believe that isn't so. *Eternals* #1 is cover dated July 1976, and issue #2 is cover dated August 1976. The *Overstreet* explanation is a reasonable guess, but it couldn't be true unless Marvel had printed *Eternals* #1-2 on the same day, both with 25¢ covers, and then changed both to 30¢ covers. Otherwise, the 25¢ *Eternals* #2 couldn't exist. I believe the real explanation is that Marvel had been test marketing a price increase with issues cover dated as early as (and possibly earlier than) April 1976!

The following list of 183 books and 57 titles are Marvel Comics published between the months of April and August 1976 which might have 30¢ cover variations. Numbers in brackets [ ] denote issues confirmed to exist.

Adventures On The Planet Of The Apes #5-7 (4, 6, 8/76)
Amazing Adv. [#36-37] #33-37 (4-8/76)
Amazing Spider-Man [#159] #155-59 (4-8/76)
Astonish. Tales [#35-36] #35-36 (5, 7/76)
Avengers [#146,149] 146-150 (4-8/76)
Black Goliath #2-4 (4, 6, 8/76)
Capt. America [#198] #196-200 (4-8/76)
Captain Marvel [#45] #44-45 (5, 7/76)
Chamber Of Chills #22-23 (5, 7/76)
Champions [#5-7] #5-7 (4, 6, 8/76)
Conan #61-65 (4-8/76)
Daredevil #132-36 (4-8/76)
Defenders [#36,38] #34-38 (4-8/76)
Doctor Strange #13-17 (4-8/76)
Eternals [#1-2] #1-2 (7-8/76)
FF [#169-171, 73] #169-73 (4-8/76)
Ghost Rider [#19] #17-19 (4, 6, 8/76)
Howard The Duck [#3] #3-4 (5, 7/76)
Incredible Hulk #198-202 (4-8/76)
Inhumans #4, 6 (4, 8/76)
Invaders [#6] #6-7 (5, 7/76)
Iron Fist [#4-5] #4-6 (4, 6, 8/76)
Iron Man #85-89 4-8/76)
Jungle Action [#22] #21-22 (5, 7/76)
Ka-Zar [#17] #15, 17 (4, 8/76)
Kid Colt Outlaw 205-09 (4-8/76)
Kull [#16] #16 (8/76)
Marvel Adventure #3-5 (4, 6, 8/76)
Marvel Chillers #4-6 (4, 6, 8/76)
Marv. Double Feature #15-17 (4, 6, 8/76)
Marvel Feature [#4-5] #4-5 (5, 7/76)
Marvel Premiere #29-31 (4, 6, 8/76)
Marvel Presents #4-6 4, (6, 8/76)
Marvel's Greatest Comics #63-64 (5, 7/76)
Marvel Spotlight [#29] #27-29 (4, 6, 8/76)
Marvel Super Heroes #57-58 (5, 7/76)
Marvel Tales [#68,70] #66-70 (4-8/76)
Marvel Team-Up #44-48 (4-8/76)
Marvel Triple Action #29-30 (5, 7/76)
Marvel 2-In-1 [#15-16] #15-18 (5-8/76)
Master Of Kung Fu #39-43 (4-8/76)
Mighty Marvel Western #44-45 (5, 7/76)
Omega [#2] #2-3 (5, 7/76)
Powerman #30-34 (4-8/76)
Rawhide Kid #133-34 (5, 7/76)
Ringo Kid #27-28 (5, 7/76)
Sgt. Fury #133-34 (5, 7/76)
Skull #5-6 (5, 7/76)
Son Of Satan [#5] #3-5 (4, 6, 8/76)
Strange Tales 185-86 (5, 7/76)
Super-Vill. Team-Up [#6] #5-7 (4, 6, 8/76)
Thor [#248,250] 246-50 (4-8/76)
Tomb of Dracula [#46-47] #43-47 (4-8/76)
Two-Gun Kid #129-31 (4, 6, 8/76)
Warlock [#13] #12-14 (4, 6, 8/76)
Werewolf By Night #38-39 (5, 7/76)
X-Men [#98-99] #98-100 (4, 6, 8/76

All of the 30¢ variations are regular copies on the inside, and amazingly listed as "25¢ per copy" on the title page of the books, showing they were not published with 30¢ as the original price. 45 30¢ cover variants exist from 28 different titles. 38 of the 183 books are reprint comics, but that doesn't necessarily exclude them, because there is one known reprint variant, *Marvel Tales* #68 and 70. No reprint variants have yet surfaced for 30¢ (1976) or 35¢ (1977) variants (although it is hoped that this will change as more collectors keep an eye out for them). Marvel made a lot of changes in 1976, publishing new titles, canceling others. Although both the 30¢ and 35¢ variants known to exist predate by five months the official price increases that occurred with all issues cover dated 9/76 and 11/77 respectively, it is certainly possible that earlier variants do exist. Every month back in time means dozens of issues that could be added to the list (as well as new titles) in the family of 30¢ variants for instance, March 1976 would add *My Love* #39. February 1976 would add *Our Love Story* #38. You get the idea.

After checking the *Gerber Photo Journal Guide To Marvel Comics*, I thought I'd discovered two more variant issues, *Inhumans* #6 and *Ka-Zar* #16, both cover dated June 1976 and priced at 30¢. Upon checking my own inventory, I was surprised to find three copies of *Ka-Zar* #16 with a 30¢ cover! I began to wonder if some of these variants were as scarce as I'd assumed. I decided to check *George Olshevsky's Marvel Comics Index*, and was disappointed to find that volume 2, the one with Ka-Zar listed, was published March 1976, and fell short by listing only up to issue #15. However, volume 8B does show *Inhumans* #6, and like the one in Gerber, the

30¢ PRICE PUZZLE

book has a 30¢ cover price. I realized that Marvel was experimenting in a different way. *Inhumans* #6 and *Ka-Zar* #16 exist only as 30¢ editions, and are listed as "30¢ per copy" on the inside, hence the omission of both books from the list. It seems that Marvel was able to test the entire market's resistance to 30¢ comics at a minimal financial risk with two secondary titles, and spot-test mainstay titles in limited numbers. This approach was certainly clever from a marketing standpoint. DC Comics raised their price to 30¢ with all comics cover dated March 1976, and Marvel feared the dip in sales DC suffered, so they likely "played" with the price before committing to it.

The 30¢ variant possibilities list contains surprisingly few "key" issues, unless you want to recognize a book like *Iron Man* #86 for the first appearance of Blizzard. Not so with 35¢ variants. *Iron Fist* #15 (a fun issue and a John Byrne X-Men crossover) definitely exists, as does *Star Wars* #1. Other key 35¢ variant possibilities include *Logan's Run* #6 (first Thanos solo story), *Omega* #9 (first full appearance 2nd Foolkiller), *2001: A Space Odyssey* #8 (first Machine Man), and *Iron Fist* #14 (first Sabretooth).

Of the eight 35¢ variants and five 30¢ variants noted in *Overstreet* #27, four of them are *Star Wars* #1-4, three are *X-Men* #98-99, and #106, and the eighth is *Iron Fist* #15. That's right, two out of three are popular, high visibility, high demand comics. Only four others have been noticed and referred to by *Overstreet* in the last 20 years! It makes sense that variant comics have remained virtually unknown until now, when you consider that they are nearly impossible to notice or detect unless you know what to look for (and when to look for it). *Thor* #248 (with a blue price box) and *Ka-Zar* #17 (with an orange colored price box), and six others with yellow colored price boxes are the only known exceptions. With such an odd appearance, these really jump out at you. Other than that, 30¢ variations can be identified by noticing the price is surrounded by a black box in the center of Marvel's jagged "the price is going up soon" balloon, which is unusual because normally Marvel prices sit alone in the balloon without the black box. The 35¢ variants can only be identified by the price difference, and appear perfectly normal in all other respects.

Although some may not agree, I personally feel variant comics are highly collectible. I also believe that the majority of variants will prove hard-to-find. Perhaps they are scarce and seemingly undervalued because few have been paying attention to them and even fewer have documented them. As the emphasis on Bronze Age continues to grow, I feel certain all that will change.

The 35¢ variant *Star Wars* #1 now sells for about ten times the regular edition, while variants of *Star Wars* #2-4 are valued in *Overstreet* the same as regular editions. (I'm unclear why this is, but I suggest a reexamination of the values). I know *Star Wars* comics are collected much more vigorously than Sabretooth comics because non-comic collector Star Wars completists want the comics too. The real question for serious collectors seems to be "is an *Iron Fist* #14 variant worth the same as a regular edition?" and if it isn't, what multiple is applicable?

Demand for the book (if it exists) among X-Men collectors would likely be high, because the ratio of non-variant to variant editions is (I believe) as high as 100 to 1, and probably much higher. As it does in other areas of the hobby, I feel that the scarcity of this material will prompt the market to place a higher price on these books than the standard issues. Consider for example *Iron Fist* #14. A non-variant edition sells for 3-4 times *Star Wars* #1. A variant of *Iron Fist* #14 (if one exists) just might bring a record for a Bronze Age comic.

For now, there's no way of knowing exactly how many exist, but it's safe to say that they aren't identified or offered all that often... and that makes the already difficult task of finishing runs for hard-core completests just that much tougher.

And we haven't yet investigated the 75¢ price variants that are known to exist (see the *Thor* #338 variant listed in *Overstreet* as an example). There's obviously much more of the price variant puzzle left for collectors to explore.

Special thanks to Bill Alexander, Charles Wood, and Doug Sulipa for variant information.

Dear CBM readers,

I am a private collector who has dealt with many of the major collectors and dealers in the US. I very rarely place an ad but the following are some high grade comic books for sale at this time. The usual applies…checks must clear, any book may be returned for a refund if you are not satisfied. Please give me a call, I love to talk comics!

Sincerely,

Joe Smejkal
908 S. 3rd St.
Richmond, Texas 77469
(281)342-8675 after 4 PM
Sorry, no answering machine!

Star Spangled #8

NM Mile High copy. This book has been off the market for 10 years. Far and above whatever is in second place! The #7 is cheap in the Guide, thusly so is the #8. Very expensive. *Call for details.*

Star Spangled #13

$4,650 NM Mile High copy. Superb, stunning and unsurpassed. All the Mile High qualities. One of the toughest with an 8 rating by Gerber. Has the Mile High code and has been off the market for the past 10 years.

Adventure #247 NM- (File copy) .$6000
Amazing Spider-Man #14 VF- $750
Amazing Spider-Man #129 NM . . .$250
Atomic War VF+ $500
Batman #10 FN+ $1100
Captain America #16 FN/VF $1600
Captain America #53 VF+ $1000
GI Combat
#69,75,76,77,78,79,80,81,82,83,90,94
High grade. Sold only as a lot . . .$1200
Human Torch #38 FN/VF $400

Flash #92

$2,900 VF/VF- Completely untouched another tough book, the only Flash to feature both Flash and Hawkman on the cover along with Black Canary. Both the cover and the pages are near white. Try to find another!

Adventure #87

$1,175 VF A very pretty book, near white still attractively priced in the Guide.

Showcase #4

$7,000 FN An unrestored beauty with off white pages with minimal stresses at the spine and staples.

Journey into Mystery # 20 VF (W.Mtn) $675
Journey into Mystery # 7 VF- $125
Submariner #41 VF- $450
Submariner #34 FN+ $300
Superboy #1 VF $4500
Terrific #14 VF $175
Terrifying Tales #13 VF $250
Thing #16 VF+ $315
Overstreet Price Guides:

#2 VF+ Soft Cov.	.$375	#4 NM Hard Cov.	.$150
#3 VF+ Soft Cov.	.$200	#5 NM Hard Cov.	.$200

My Want List: Green Lantern #5 (GA) Mile High copy… I'll pay a lot for this book!
Also looking for these books in VF or better:
Green Lantern #30 (GA) ; Submariner #32 (GA); World's Finest #71; All Winners #19

Fifty Thrifty SCROOGE

Collecting the first f of fandom's fav

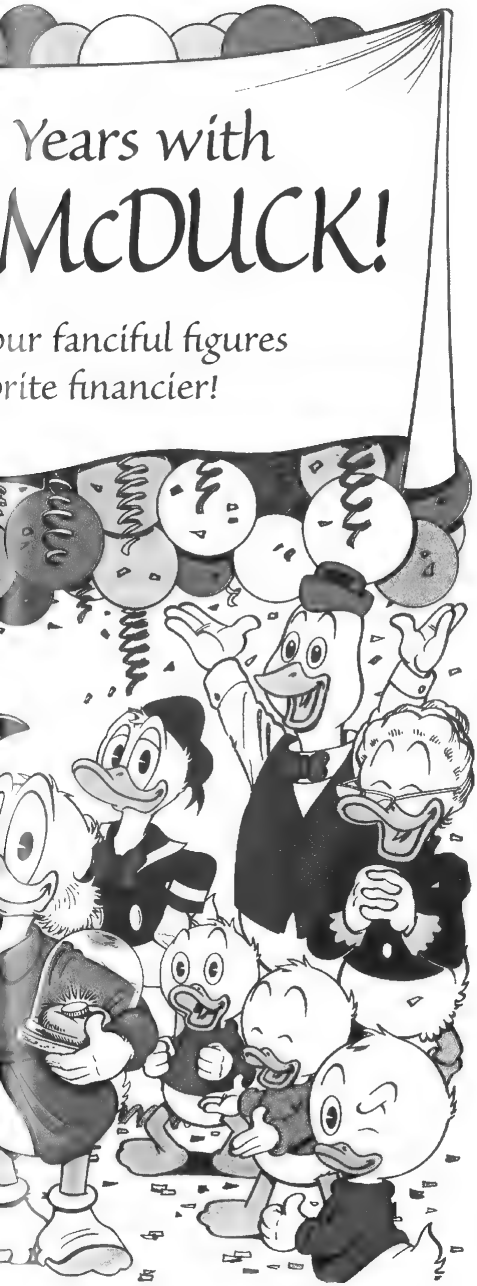
Art by Don Rosa

It seems hard to believe that fifty years have passed since the Magnificent Miser first appeared in "Christmas on Bear Mountain" (*Four Color* #179, December 1947). Yet with all of his appearances in hundreds of comic books over the last fifty years, you would think that Disney and Western Publishing would have merchandised the daylights out of Scrooge's image. Not so! Amazingly, there was only a handful of Scrooge toys produced in the first two decades of the Paragon of Parsimony's existence! In fact, it wasn't until the animated TV show *Duck Tales* debuted in 1987 that any concerted effort was made to mass produce Scrooge items, most designed to appeal to kids.

Looking at the very first Scrooge products, one has to wonder... did the designers ever consider the fact that children would be handling and... (choke, gasp) playing with these delicately crafted objects? And after manufacture, how many safety-minded parents, fearful of choking hazards and sharp points, wouldn't even allow their kids to play with a small breakable ceramic figurine? And if kids actually got their hands on one, how long did it survive before it was pulverized and discarded? It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that most early Scrooge toys were destined for destruction!

And one of the few places that sold these interesting

ALL CHARACTERS, TITLES, COVERS, IMAGES © WALT DISNEY CO.



collectibles was the newly-opened Disneyland ("The Happiest Place on Earth") in Anaheim, California, just south of Los Angeles. If you were lucky enough to live within driving distance of the Magic Kingdom… and you begged your parents long enough… you might have been one of the lucky kids who survived ("are we there yet?") the hours-long automobile trek to the House That Mickey Built. Once there, kids and parents alike were exposed to a veritable cornucopia of Disneyana.

Frontierland pushed Davy Crockett hats and toy muskets… Fantasyland hawked character hats (at the "Mad Hatter" booth) and "dumb girl stuff" (including Cinderella and Snow White dolls)… and Tomorrowland's Jr. Autopia ride was the source of a free promotional comic book (supplied by Atlantic Richfield) and "Man In Space" rocket ship models.

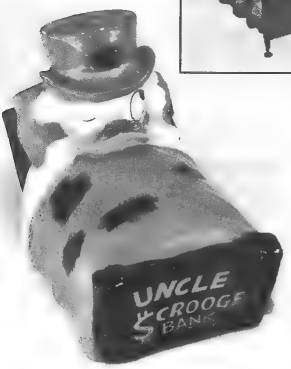
But the most strategically placed merchandise Mecca in the entire park was the entire length of Main Street USA, it includes my favorite… the Disneyland General Store! There you could buy a rainbow selection of stick candies, rummage through piles of inexpensively priced classic animation cels (hundreds of them stacked in a pile… those were the days), watch the glass blower create your favorite Disney character in crystal, and aisle after aisle crammed with an endless assortment of plastic, paper, and ceramic Disney characters. This very General Store

BY MICHAEL NAIMAN

featured the two earliest figures of Uncle Scrooge. The first was the Hagen-Renaker ceramic Scrooge. Hagen-Renaker, famous for their production of diminutive ceramic Disney figures, had a license to produce these elegant collectibles from 1955–61. The detailed figures were truly masterworks in miniature. Lady and the Tramp figures were sold exclusively at Disneyland during 1955. In 1956, the company added figures from Alice in Wonderland, Bambi, Cinderella, Dumbo, and television's *Mickey Mouse Club*. Along with Mickey, Donald and the nephews, Hagen-Renaker included the likeness of everyone's favorite penny-pincher… Scrooge McDuck. This figurine has come to be known among collectors as "The Hagen-Renaker Ceramic Scrooge" (production No. 5022). If you were fortunate to find the figure complete with the paper dollar bill, this very early (and probably first) Scrooge likeness could bring as much as $250–400.

The other figure sold at the Disneyland General Store (albeit six years later) was the Marx Scrooge "Disneykin." In 1960, Louis Marx (master toy maker and long-time Disney licensee), introduced a new toy sensation. The company's announcement flyer proclaimed "All Sell Breaks Loose" based on low cost (15¢ each or eight for a dollar) figures called Disneykins. Each of these miniature plastic figures (34 different characters in the first series) were hand painted and came packaged in a variety of ways. In 1961, a second series of 38 figures was released and became popularly known as the "New Disneykins" of which Scrooge McDuck was a member.

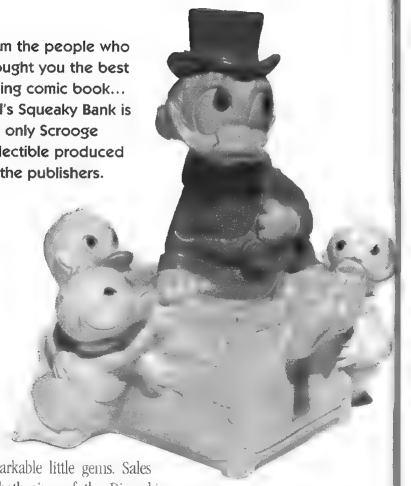
Keeping a watchful eye on his expensive security blanket may be a challenge. The "Bed Bank" and Uncle Scrooge #36 make their debut in 1961.



Old McDuck came in a variety of packages which included the blue open-faced display box with cellophane window, the green candy box, the blue gift set box with shelves, and the elusive light purple, 3 inch by 3 inch "TV Scenes" box complete with background scene and separate plastic cash register.

But, perhaps the most mysterious of the Disneykin figures are the so-called "Disney-Kids" group which appeared briefly in 1962. Modeled after the "full-size" Disneykin toys, these figures measured only 1 1/8 inches tall, compared with the larger 1 1/2 inch size of the regular series. No official "Disney-kids" advertising brochures from Marx have ever been uncovered, nor have any store displays or boxes ever been found for these

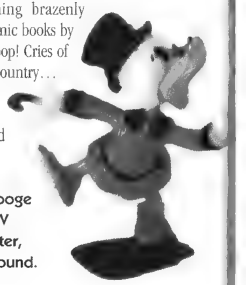
From the people who brought you the best selling comic book… Dell's Squeaky Bank is the only Scrooge collectible produced by the publishers.



remarkable little gems. Sales on both sizes of the Disneykins range from $250–600 depending upon condition and whether they come "loose" or complete in the original box.

If you were fortunate to have your parents buy a Scrooge miniature memento for you during those early days of Disneyland, then, chances are your next encounter with a Scrooge collectible might have occurred at your local comic book source. While inspecting each of your Dell comics at the spin rack, you would have encountered a centerfold display ad containing a entire shopping center of kid-oriented merchandise beckoning to be purchased! Grabbing your favorite "must read" titles you'd then stroll up to the counter and shell out your hard earned money. Three comics… three dimes… but wait, the clerk says, "Sorry young man, but these will cost you 45¢!" Your mouth moves but no words can be heard. Staring at the cover in complete disbelief and shock, you finally comprehend the unthinkable economic disaster that has befallen your young life!

That unthinkable economic disaster occurred in 1961, when Western Publishing brazenly raised the price of their Dell comic books by a whopping 50% in one fell swoop! Cries of disbelief were heard across the country… "a comic book… choke… that cost… 15¢? This must be the Twilight Zone!" Wails and

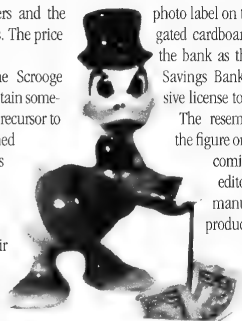


Battle of the Lilliputians; Disneykin & Disney-Kid Scrooge along with extremely rare TV Scenes box with cash register, figure, and painted background.

lamenting could be heard in drugstores and newsstands all over America… and ultimately in the hallowed halls of the publisher. Seeking to placate the aggrieved masses, Western introduced the "Dell Trading Post" in their comic magazines. Kids could "trade" for giant space maps, secret seal rings, initialed slave bracelets, or the much-needed (and little used) three-way desk set. According to the Trading Post instructions all you had to do was (gulp) "…cut off the top strip of each Dell comic cover!"

After mailing in the cover strips along with the appropriate amount of money, you received your special gift within those seemingly interminable "…4–6 weeks." One of the Trading Post mementos was a sculpted image of our favorite Denizen of Duckburg… The Dell Uncle Scrooge "Squeaky" bank. It is the only Scrooge artifact actually produced by the people who brought you the best-selling comic book. The word "Dell" is even stamped on the side of the toy. Noted Scrooge collector, Wes Plumbtree, reports two model variations… one on which the nephews have red sweaters and the other with unpainted or "white" sweaters. The price on this item range from $150–200.

A similar toy in the likeness of the Scrooge "Squeaky" bank was produced in Great Britain sometime after the introduction of the bank. A precursor to the popular cartoon character themed "Soaky Toys," the English version was designed so that Scrooge's top hat unscrewed to reveal the toy's contents… every kid's favorite, liquid bubble bath.



Western's experiment of "soaking" their readers (pun intended) for an extra nickel at the newsstand was soon abandoned, the Dell Trading Post closed up shop at the end of 1961, the publishers backed down in early 1962 by lowering the cover prices to 12¢, eventually all their major licenses (Warner, Disney, etc.) were transferred to Gold Key, and the rest is history.

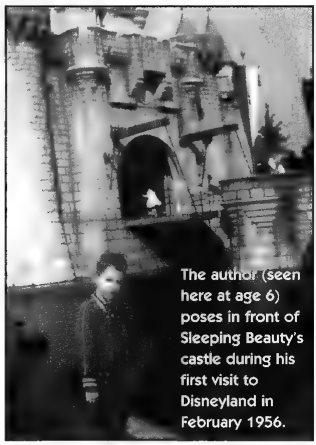
The fourth Scrooge figure euphemistically called the "Bed Bank" has one of the more interesting legacies among Disney duck collectibles and in fact is something of a mystery. It seems that of the many responsibilities shouldered by Western Publishing editors was to develop cover concepts that could be assigned—ahead of publication—to any in their stable of artists. Twelve months might pass from the time of the actual assignment until the artist's final rendering was ultimately published as a comic book cover.

The likely theory behind this intriguing Scrooge mystery starts with this observation: On the cover of *Uncle Scrooge* #36, cover dated December 1961/ February 1962, is a near-perfect likeness of the Japanese-made ceramic Uncle Scrooge "Bed" Bank. Interestingly, the box the figure was sold in is copyrighted 1961 and so was probably released that same year. The photo label on the yellow corregated cardboard box describes the bank as the "Walt Disney Savings Bank" under exclusive license to Dan Brechner.

The resemblance between the figure on the cover of the comic book and the actual bank is striking! Was an editor at Western "cooperating" with an outside manufacturer by helping him to promote a new product? It's possible, but so far no one really knows for sure. Prices for the bank alone can range anywhere from $75–150 (add $100 or so for the box) depending on condition.

And there you have it—four Uncle Scrooge "publisher's playthings" and "Magic Kingdom miniatures." And if you think you might be inclined to try and locate these four early examples of Scroogiana, there's good news because locating them is not as difficult as the average collector might think. In contrast to some of the other, more hyper-competitive collecting fields, the small network of hardcore Scrooge collectors actually enjoys sharing information and assisting others in obtaining these wonderful artifacts! It won't take fifty years (or three cubic acres of money) to amass a collection of these items… or any of your favorite Scrooge memorabilia for that matter! All it takes is a little time and a… ahem… "thrifty" pocketbook. With a few calls and a pinch of perseverance, you can have a collection you can be proud to share with your fellow hobbyists and friends.

You too can celebrate Scrooge McDuck's Golden Jubilee by embarking on your own expedition to the land of Scroogiana! Even if you don't have the cash of Croesus, the giga-bucks of a billionaire, or the dollars of the World's Richest Duck… you can still treat yourself to a wonderful and affordable 1950–60's Scrooge collection.



The author (seen here at age 6) poses in front of Sleeping Beauty's castle during his first visit to Disneyland in February 1956.

While not the "classic" red-coated Scrooge, the Hagen-Renaker blue coated ceramic may be the first American made figural representation of Duckburg's favorite figure of frugality (center left).

Thanks to Don Rosa, Pat S. Calhoun, Wes Plumbtree, Phil Barnhart, Pat Hanifin, and Abby Weissman for their support and information.

An Origin

By Keif Fromm

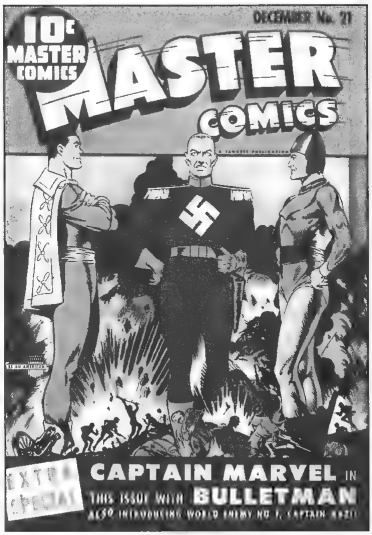
To read the introductions of Superman, Batman, Captain Marvel, Human Torch, Sub-Mariner, and most other major characters, one must simply acquire a copy (or a reprint) of a single issue. This is not the case with the origin of Fawcett Comics' Captain Marvel Junior. To read the "elusive" origin of this important Fawcett star, a collector must locate three different Golden Age issues from two separate titles.

Part I

The first part of Captain Marvel Junior's origin trilogy begins in *Master Comics* #21 (December 1941) and is illustrated by Mac Raboy. The tale begins by saying: "Introducing the scourge of Europe...The terror of the age...That one and only Captain Nazi! But close on his trail is Bulletman to see that the one-man blitz is a flop...And just to make sure of things, Mighty Captain Marvel sits in on the game to play his hand!"

As Hitler is addressing his warlords in a secluded mountain retreat in Germany, he informs them of his greatest achievement in humbling America. As Hitler introduces Captain Nazi, he shows him a diagram depicting Captain Marvel, Bulletman, Spy Smasher, and Minute-Man. Hitler roars, "These are your new opponents Captain Nazi! Your first job will be to rid America of those weaklings called heroes."

When Captain Nazi gives a brief demonstration of his abilities, Hitler instructs him to begin his duties destroying the USA. Once Captain Nazi finishes terrorizing a crowd, Bulletman and Captain Marvel get wind of this new threat and team up to



Only recently has the origin trilogy of Captain Marvel Junior

Trilogy

thwart him. After pulling the rails up from a subway platform, and toppling a carnival's loaded Ferris wheel, Captain Nazi informs the American public that he will blow up the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Captain Marvel arrives just in time to take the impact of the bomb and discovers Bulletman and Bulletgirl arriving on the scene.

As the dust settles Captain Marvel finds a note from Captain Nazi. It says, "You'd better keep your snooping nose in *Whiz Comics*, Captain Marvel... Because I'm coming over there next month to beat your brains out! I'll get Bulletman later" —signed, Captain Nazi.

Part II

The second part is the feature of *Whiz Comics* #25 (December 1941) and is illustrated by C.C. Beck and Mac Raboy. The

The origin trilogy of Fawcett's Captain Marvel Jr.– Master Comics #21 (Dec 1941), Whiz Comics #25 (Dec 1941), Master Comics #22 (Jan 1942).

Originally published in Comic Book Marketplace *#27 (September 1995).*

received the long awaited recognition it deserves.

chronicle continues with Billy Batson addressing the reader and saying, "He's here folks! Smashing his way right out of *Master Comics* and into our own *Whiz*, Captain Nazi is cutting a path of sabotage and destruction across the country! Can nothing stop him?"

As Billy Batson reads the news on WHIZ Radio, his transmission is interrupted when Captain Nazi cuts in with his own broadcast. After Billy transforms into Captain Marvel, he finds himself tangling with Captain Nazi once more and saving WHIZ engineer, Whitney Murphy from being thrown from a radio tower. Once again, Captain Marvel sees Captain Nazi evade his clutches.

Shortly after that, Billy and his team cover the ignition of a gigantic defense dam and power project. As the senator pushes the power button, all the spectators begin hearing Captain Nazi's boisterous laughter from above. It seems that he has sabotaged the turbines so they will continue to accelerate until the power station and dam blow up. Billy Batson learns of this and speeds away to become Captain Marvel. As Captain Marvel leans his shoulder against the turbine wheel to wear it down, he finds that Captain Nazi has escaped once again.

While Billy and Whitney are at their next broadcast at a nearby airfield, Billy sees through his binoculars that Captain Nazi is strangling the pilot of America's newest secret fighter plane. Captain Marvel ends up saving the pilot and plane, and punches Captain Nazi unconscious into the bay below.

Not long after this slug-fest, we are introduced to the young Freddy Freeman and his grandfather. As they fish, they see the body of Captain Nazi floating in the water. Freddy's grandfather pulls Captain Nazi aboard the dinghy in an attempt to save him, but the evil agent of Hitler awakens and slugs the elderly man into the water (killing him instantly). Immediately the young Freddy Freeman attacks Captain Nazi with an oar. In retaliation, Captain Nazi wrestles with Freddy, whacks him with the oar, and watches the boy fall into the bay to drown.

As Captain Marvel is flying overhead, he sees the boy floating in the water. Scooping him up, Captain Marvel transports Freddy to a hospital where he awaits (as Billy Batson) news of the youth's condition. Billy eventually discovers from the nurse that the boy's back is broken and that if he lives, he will be crippled for life.

As the climax of one of the greatest origin stories in comic book history, Billy takes a desperate chance and carries the youngster through the ancient terminal (at the stroke of midnight) to visit the ghost of the wizard, Shazam! The ancient wise man asserts to Billy. "What has already come to pass cannot be changed by any power of mine." Shazam does explain to Billy that as Captain Marvel, he can pass on some of his mighty powers to the boy. When the helpless juvenile views Captain Marvel and speaks his name, a flash of lightning is seen and the boy says, "I'm all well again! I'm strong, I-I'm like you!" Captain Marvel then exclaims, "That's right! You're Captain Marvel Junior!"

As they depart, Captain Marvel declares to Captain Marvel Jr. "You will have to go through life in your own form, but whenever you need me, speak my name and as Captain Marvel Jr. you will be able to do the things I do. Now go back in [the hospital] and get well. And then I'm going to send you into *Master Comics* to take care of Captain Nazi."

Part III

The third and final part of this great Golden Age epic is told in *Master Comics* #22 (January 1942), illustrated by Mac Raboy. It begins when a shriveled old man called Dr. Eternity, peers at a list of ten names that he has slated for "the wax death," his way of displaying figures in his private museum. The first three names... Peter Costo (Peter Costanza/Comic Artist for Fawcett), Sir Clarence Beck (C. C. Beck/Comic Artist for Fawcett), and Irwin Wile (Layout Artist for Fawcett's non-comic magazines) have already been victimized and crossed off the list.

Dr. Eternity summons four of his thugs and instructs them to capture his next martyr on the list (Sir Henry Eliot). Meanwhile, at the home of Sir Eliot and his wife, Sergeant Kent, Susan Kent (AKA Bulletgirl), and Jim Barr (AKA Bulletman) attempt to discern whether the threatening note from Dr. Eternity is fact or fiction.

Suddenly, Lady Eliot screams, "Look at the window!" As they all look in horror at a gruesome face peering in, the lights go out. When Jim Barr leaps forward to turn on the light, they see that Sir Henry Eliot is gone!

Once the hysteria has stopped, Jim and Susan meet outside to discuss their next move. Jim tells Susan that Bulletman must handle this case without Bulletgirl's aide. The panel of Bulletman flying away segues into Dr. Eternity speaking to Captain Nazi by telephone. Dr. Eternity brags to Captain Nazi, "I got Eliot today... and he's preserved as the others for eternity! Yes, Sir Thomas Welch is next!" Captain Nazi replies by saying, "Gute! Carry on herr Doctor. I must leave now. I'm in a hurry [because] this Captain Marvel swine is on my tail!"

Since Sir Thomas Welch received a note similar to Sir Eliot, Bulletman decides to wait patiently in the trees outside the home of Dr. Eternity's next victim. Finally, Bulletman hears a commotion coming from inside and finds that Dr. Eternity's goons have broken in via a window upstairs. Once Bulletman pummels the four intruders, he speeds off to a destination close by to find a young boy on a crutch limping toward him.

The youngster approaches Bulletman and says, "Am I glad to see you!" Bulletman responds by saying, "Same here sonny. Maybe I can help you...are you lost?" The boy exclaims, "Gosh no! I'm not lost. I just got over from *Whiz Comics*. Billy Batson sent me over here to *Master Comics*." After speaking, "Captain Marvel!" and showing Bulletman that he is now Captain Marvel Jr., they both soar off to the museum to do battle with Dr. Eternity and Captain Nazi. During this climactic confrontation, Dr. Eternity is defeated, but Captain Nazi evades the clutches of justice once more.

As Bulletman and Captain Marvel Jr. bid each other farewell for now, the epic concludes with a final panel showing CMJ addressing the readers. He announces, "Hope you'll be on hand next month, fellas... I'm going to be in 'my own' exciting adventure strip!"

Only recently has the origin trilogy of Captain Marvel Junior received its much deserved and long awaited recognition. With *Master Comics* #21, one not only sees a heroic teaming of Captain Marvel and Bulletman, but the reader is also introduced to one of the Golden Age's most infamous and interesting villains...Captain Nazi. *Whiz Comics* #25 contains spectacular nonstop brawling between Captain Marvel and Captain Nazi, and introduced the first of many inductees into the Fawcett Marvel Family, including Captain Marvel Jr. The climactic conclusion in *Master* #22 depicts Bulletman and Captain Marvel Jr. joining forces to outwit both Captain Nazi, and the deranged anti-American Dr. Eternity.

All three issues are examples of "marvelous" plot and character development, panel art storytelling and near perfect "linking" between issues. The superb artistry of Mac Raboy and C. C. Beck must be seen to be appreciated. These two comic book giants gave life to characters that changed the course of comic book history. But whether you're a Fawcett fan or not, it's easy to see why these three comics are a classic... and hard-to-find origin.

SKYWALD HORROR

Continued from page 36

Golden and Silver Age greats, displaced by a great new concept!

Psycho #8 (September 1972) is the first issue to welcome you to the "Horror-Mood," which soon became Skywald's catch phrase. In fact, subsequent issues had "A Skywald Horror-Mood Publication" plastered right across the cover, which indeed helped me in my younger years, to pick out the "right" magazines from the rack.

Alan Hewetson became "Archaic Al" and it was evident that he was intent on giving everyone a good time, not just the readers, but his staff as well. Everyone had a Horror-Mood nickname (Paranoid Pablo Marcos, Dying Doug Moench, Emotionally-disturbed Ed Fedory—among others) and everybody seemed to be "in" on the joke. He developed a fan-friendly letters/news page that let readers know what their favorite creators were up to, including behind the scenes photos, biographies, and news of works in progress. It was all written in the Horror-Mood style—tons of ghostly, ghastly, gruesome, gory adjectives, and full of alliterations (a device Hewetson says he borrowed from Basil Wolverton—who is profiled in *Nightmare* #10 (December 1972) as a "guest artist"—but he may also owe a little debt to his former boss at Marvel!)

Each issue also had a short article devoted to a current horror film, including (in *Nightmare* #8, August 1972) a review of Amicus Films' *Tales from the Crypt* (starring the great Peter Cushing) which reprinted panels from Hewetson's other inspiration—EC Comics!

Reader input was crucial to the Horror-Mood magazines. There was a recurring feature called "*Nightmare* World," where a reader would write about his or her worst dreams, which would in turn be adapted and drawn into a comic story. Fans were constantly sending in scripts, and many saw print! One fan, Augustine Funnell, even became a permanent member of the staff, or "Mood-team" as they called it!

Contests were frequently found. One contest gave away some original Bill Everett art from one of his earlier pin-ups (I still wish I'd won that one)! Many "gargoyle eggs" were also given away. Sure, they were just rocks, but we tried to win those too!

Always trying to get input, surveys were frequently used to determine reader's likes and dislikes. The "Big Bunch of Questions" asked us what type of stories we wanted to see. In an article in the *Comics Journal* #127 (March 1989), Hewetson revealed some of his more hysterical responses: "More horror and superheroes and more Silver Surfer and Conan, and why not make *Psycho* the first X-rated horror magazine using these characters?" "Don't waste space for cover art. Just start the first story on the cover and continue it on the inside cover and then keep going!" "How about a story about a guy or gal who is really dead, does not come back to life, and nothing actually happens at all except he rots in his coffin?" "My husband wants to see more broads in heels." Hmmmm... wonderful ideas all?!

Of course the real draw of the Horror-Mood magazines was the stories and art. The writers created a real nightmare world and the artists showed us what it looked like. The Mood-team artists provided the perfect dripping atmosphere: Pablo Marcos' fluid fine lines and wash; Suso's realism in stark blacks and whites; the intricate, almost wood-cut style of Dela Rosa and the brilliant wash work of Maelo Cintron. Cintron's work created such smooth textures that they seemed to come right off the page! Amazing covers were provided by Segrelles, Ken Kelly, JAD (Judas Diabolis?) and Miralles. These artists, among many other regulars, turned in top-shelf work issue after issue... work that rivaled (and in many cases surpassed) anything that the competition was publishing at the time.

Psycho #11 (March 1973, the issue that my father found disgusting), is a prime slice of Horror-Mood. The stories that offended my dad were "Hit and Run: Miss and Die," a tale set in the 1920s, of Chicago bootleggers who give a night watchman the ol' cement shoe and a swim in the river, only to have his fish-eaten corpse gnaw himself free (just above the ankle) and "stump off into the night" to get his revenge! There's also a few axes-in-the-head to be found between the covers elsewhere.

But surely the most offending story was the truly grisly two-pager "Make Mephisto's Child Burn" by Fedory and Dela Rosa. Drawn in "widescreen" (to be read across the two pages, rather than one page at a time—device often used with success by Skywald) this one is about a pregnant witch giving birth while burning at the stake. It really does push the envelope, but these are horror comics. Perhaps Dad should've stuck with Betty and Veronica that morning!

The next month's offering, *Nightmare* #12 (April 1973, the swamp issue), is another memorable issue. "The Premature Burial" checks in as the first of many Edgar Allen Poe adaptations and is followed by Chic Stone's cartoony and gory "Kiss of the Vampires." The artwork is a little out of place here, but is very pleasing in its own right. Also on the issue's roster is Hewetson and Borrell's "The Assassin Bug"—an exciting war/science fiction mix, but the real fun in #12 is the cover story, "I Am Dead; I Am Buried." It's a phenom-

Skywald Horror Magazine

NIGHTMARE
- #1 (Dec '70)
- #2 (Feb '71)
- #3 (Apr '71)
- #4 (Jun '71)
- #5 (Aug '71)
- #6 (Dec '71)
- #7 (Jun '72)
- #8 (Aug '72)
- #9 (Oct '72)
- #10 (Dec '72)
- #11 (Feb '73)
- #12 (Apr '73)
- #13 (Jun '73)
- #14 (Aug '73)
- #15 (Oct '73)
- #16 (Dec '73)
- #17 (Feb '74)
- #18 (Apr '74)
- #19 (Jun '74)
- #20 (Aug '74)
- #21 (Oct '74) 1974 Summer Special
- #22 (Oct '74)
- #23 (Feb '75) 1975 Winter Special
- 1972 Annual
- 1973 Winter Special
- 1974 Yearbook

PSYCHO
- #1 (Jan '71)
- #2 (Mar '71)
- #3 (May '71)
- #4 (Sept '71)
- #5 (Nov '71)
- #6 (May '72)
- #7 (July '72)
- #8 (Sept '72)
- #9 (Nov '72)
- #10 (Jan '73)
- #11 (Mar '73)
- #12 (May '73)
- #13 (Jul ' 73)
- #14 (Sept '73)
- #15 (Nov '73)
- #16 (Jan '74)
- #17 (Mar '74)
- #18 (May '74)
- #19 (Jul '74)
- #20 (Aug '74)
- #21 (Oct '74) 1974 Fall Special (replaces #22)
- #23 (Jan '75)
- #24 (Mar '75) - 1975 Winter Special
- 1972 Annual
- 1974 Yearbook

SCREAM
- #1 (Aug '73)
- #2 (Oct '73)
- #3 (Dec '73)
- #4 (Feb '74)
- #5 (Apr '74)
- #6 (Jun '74)
- #7 (Jul '74)
- #8 (Aug '74)
- #9 (Sept '74)
- #10 (Oct '74)
- #11 (Feb '75) - 1975 Winter Special

enally good story about a convict (whose breakout attempt had failed) being tortured by "the screws" (police) in an old bayou prison. Afterwards, the prisoner is thrown into a "hot pit" for safe keeping. He dies in the pit, but that doesn't curb his appetite for escape as he makes his was into the swamp, intent on freedom despite his rotting frame! Cut to the author of the story, sitting in a coffee shop, wondering how he should end his tale! It gets even more wild when the corpse crashes through the coffee shop window and seizes the author, telling him to write him a proper burial! If that's not strange enough, the corpse also rips right through the panels of the page to make a kid at the newsstand (reading this very story!) tell the author how to bury him! Such lapses in reality are incredible departures from normal comic fare and part of the fun of the Horror-Mood!

Skywald Horror Reprints

In the late 1980s, Eternity Comics, a division of Malibu graphics, reprinted many Skywald stories and series in a variety of titles. All issues had new covers.

E. A. Poe - Tell-tale Heart and Other Stories (June '88)
E. A. Poe - Pit and the Pendulum and Other Stories (Sept '88)
E. A. Poe - Masque of Red Death and Other Stories (Dec '88)
E. A. Poe - The Black Cat and Other Stories (Mar '89)
E. A. Poe - Murders in the Rue Morgue and other stories (Mar '89)
Fright #1-12 (July '88-'89)
Ghouls #1 (Jan '89) (Reprints Psycho #15 - The All Ghoul Issue)
Howl #1-2 ('88-Apr '89) All Skywald werewolf stories!
Human Gargoyles #1-4 (Jun '88-Jan '89)
Phantom of the Opera (Jun '88)
Vampyres #1-4 (Sept '88-Jul '89)
Victims #1-5 (Aug '88-Feb '89) Reprints "Saga of the Victims" series.

A quick peek at the *Overstreet Guide* will tell you that some of the more well known artists of the time did work for Skywald and it's true. Bernie Wrightson did an illustration for the back cover of *Nightmare* #9 (October 1972) and Mike Kaluta has a story in *Nightmare* #6 (December 1971) which was reprinted in *Nightmare* #21 (1974 Summer Special). Current Wonder Woman artist John Byrne had his first published work in *Nightmare* #20 (August 1972), a two pager for which he provided the pencils.

Skywald had planned to start up a black and white science fiction magazine entitled *Science Fiction Odyssey* (first advertised as early as *Nightmare* #5 (August 1971), but after a year or so, the project folded. The old notion that science fiction was not a lucrative genre for comics had once again reared its ugly head and killed the title before it was born. It's too bad, because the premier issue was to feature work by some great names in comics. Luckily, the stories wound up being used in *Nightmare* and *Psycho*. The Jeff Jones cover was used for *Psycho* #12 (May 1973), and the Mike Kaluta story (his second for Skywald) was used in *Psycho* #13 (July 1973).

Hewetson had also planned a humor magazine, but it never materialized either. A third horror title did emerge, however, and it was great! *Scream* #1 (August 1973) hit the stands with a superb Segrelles cover and gave us readers more of what we wanted! A strait-jacketed Archaic Al even acts as the host of the first story! (It wasn't uncommon for Hewetson or any number of his writers and artists to be involved in the stories—even as main characters! Just part of the Horror-Mood fun!) A fourth horror title, Tomb or Horror, was planned and created, but the debut issue wound up being used as *Nightmare* #22 (October 1974), the aptly sub-titled "Tomb of Horror Special Edition!"

The Heap wasn't the only character that earned his own series and amazingly, Skywald's books featured many continuing characters. They adapted H. P. Lovecraft's Cthulu Mythos and extended it into a series of new stories. *Scream* featured Lady Satan, as well as Nosferatu, whose tale was told over the course of nine chapters. But Hewetson and Suso's "Saga of the Victims" was *Scream*'s real blockbuster series. The Victims were Josey Forster and Anne Adams, two friends who are inexplicably thrown from one nightmare world to another. They must endure zombies, nazis, dinosaurs, snakes, natural disasters and more zombies! They must rely on their brains and inner strength to survive, all the while keeping their mini skirts on! (Skywald often skimped on clothing, but never on pulchritude!) This was a very exciting series that unfortunately never saw its closing chapter before the title finally folded.

Other characters came and went with varying degrees of success, but "The Human Gargoyles" was Skywald's most beloved series.

As early as *Nightmare* #6, with the aforementioned "Living Gargoyle," Skywald had given us stories of turtle-beaked gargoyles. In *Psycho* #8 (September 1972), Hewetson and Dela Rosa presented us with the first chapter of "The Human Gargoyles," and it was evident that they knew they were on to something special. With the second chapter, the series moved from *Psycho* to *Nightmare*, Maelo Cintron took over the artwork, and the Gargoyles really took flight!

The Human Gargoyles were Edward and Mina Satyros, two cathedral gargoyles accidentally brought to life by a Satanist cult. Rather than being demonic, they strove to be human. They found circus work and gave birth to a child, Andrew, and eventually went to America to make a new life for themselves. Naturally, being gargoyles, they found much prejudice and hatred. They crossed the country searching for respect and freedom, but found mostly jail time for the proud Edward. They became American citizens, but not without encountering a few supernatural beings, as well as the human monsters, along the way.

Alan Hewetson made the Human Gargoyles his most interesting creation. The characters are full of emotion, hope and humanity. Anyone who's a bit of an outsider can relate to the plight of the Satyros family (perhaps with the exception of battling Lovecraftian demons!). Maelo Cintron's artwork is simply beautiful—some of the best to ever grace black and white comics. A variety of techniques created an incredibly smooth, textured, dynamic style that brought out the emotion, sensitivity, and beauty of the story. Cintron, while always a personal favorite of mine, is one of comicdom's unsung heroes.

The Horror-Mood comics were also very good at adapting classic works of horror literature. Robert Louis Stevenson's "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" was featured in the *Nightmare* 1972 Annual, Oscar Wilde's "Picture of Dorian Gray" was adapted in *Scream* #5 (April 1974) and Gaston Leroux' "Phantom of the Opera" got the Horror-Mood treatment in *Scream* #3 (December 1973). But Edgar Allen Poe was the real favorite. Archaic Al adapted no less than 19 Poe stories into comic form. Says Hewetson, "I have

tried to be respectful and literally adapt the narratives as best as possible." The Poe stories are some of the highlights of the Skywald line. For a touch of class, the original authors were always credited as "contributors" on the contents page!

In 1973, Skywald struck a deal with the art studio Selecciones Illustradas of Spain. The deal gave Skywald syndication throughout Europe and South America, in exchange for work for the studio's artists. The Horror-Mood stories were then being adapted into five languages and getting much more distribution. The new artists, for the most part, provided more fresh, exciting art, and gave the Mood-team bullpen a few more exotic names. (Maelo Cintron, Pablo Marcos and workhorse Ricardo Villamonte, all Skywald veterans with "exotic" names, were part of the New York staff!). The syndication kept the Horror-Mood stories reprinting for years to come.

Of course, all good things must come to an end. By the beginning of 1975, there was a glut of black and white horror magazines on the stands. Marvel put out multiple titles (sound familiar?) to join the Skywald, Warren and Eerie Publications lines. This put a nail into Skywald's coffin, who had always produced their magazines on a lower budget. Also, the bigger budget competitors had been raiding the Skywald bullpen on a regular basis. These factors, along with the ever-increasing production costs, forced Skywald Publishing out of the business after a five year run... but during those five years, that small company put out some of the finest horror comics of the time!

The Mood-team had a real feel for horror comics and Alan Hewetson knew how to put together an extremely enjoyable package. Skywald magazines may not be for everyone (like my Dad), but if you're a horror fan, you've gotta love 'em!

So, now that I am a father myself, would I let my daughter, who is now sixteen, read *Psycho* #11? Of course I would—it's great stuff! But I've got the feeling that she'd rather stick to her Betty and Veronicas!

Skywald's Poe Adaptations

Edgar Allen Poe was Skywald's favorite author to adapt into comic form. No less than 19 stories were adapted! Here is a checklist for the growing number of Poe comics collectors:

The Premature Burial - Nightmare #12 (4/73)
Pit and the Pendulum - Scream #2 (10/73)
House of Usher - Scream #3 (12/73)
The Oblong Box - Scream #4 (2/74)
Cask of Amontillado - Scream #5 (4/74)
Conqueror Worm & the Haunted Palace - Scream #5 (4/74)
Descent into Maelstrom - Pyscho #18 (5/74)
Ms. Found in a Bottle - Scream #6 (6/74)
William Wilson - Nightmare #19 (6/74)
Berenice - Scream #7 (7/74)
Ligeia - Psycho #19 (7/74)
The Black Cat - Nightmare #20 (8/74)
Masque of Red Death - Psycho #20 (8/74)
The Tell-tale Heart - Scream #8 (8/74)
Metzengerstein - Scream #9 (9/74)
Facts in the case of M. Valdemar - Psycho #21 (10/74)
Murders in the Rue Morgue - Scream #10 (10/74)
Man of the Crowd - Psycho #23 (1/75)
(Mr. Poe and) the Raven - Scream #11 (2/75)
A biography of Edgar Allen Poe appeared in Psycho #16 (1/74)

Each panel of Maelo Cintron's innovative strip "Human Gargoyles" was packed with an amazing variety of action, emotion, and unique "lighting" styles.

Continued from page 33

One successful comic Fawcett introduced, was *Nyoka the Jungle Girl*. She debuted as a quarterly in the Winter of 1945 and ran under the Fawcett banner for an incredible 77 issues! Charlton continued the run after Fawcett left the comic book publishing arena.

Unlike her semi-naked contemporaries over at Fiction House, Nyoka was a prude, a college graduate type who wore short pants and shirt… with long sleeves! Nyoka owned a jungle souvenir shop, hired herself out as a guide, and seemed to be in the employ of the US government, for she was often asked by some Washington DC-based investigation department to look into suspicious goings on such as drug running, uprising, illegal arms shipments, and god-knows-what.

Naturally, breathtaking adventures would result with their fair share of bondage with Nyoka often bashed over the head, boiled in oil, or burned at the stake… all situations from which she miraculously escaped. This writer has always had a soft spot for Nyoka; hers was the first American comic book I ever saw — British edition of course.

The late 1940s was the big changeover period for many comic publishers, Fawcett included. Superheroes were disappearing and being replaced by crime, more jungle, humor, and western titles. Fawcett, mindful of their "good guy" image, turned primarily to the last of these but featuring well-known cowboy movie stars. *Wow Comics* starring Mary Marvel, was changed to *Real Western Hero* with issue #69… the first issue under the new banner came out in September 1948.

Real Western Hero carried stories starring Tom Mix, Hopalong Cassidy, Monte Hale, and Gabby Hayes. With the exception of Hopalong, who had been on the go in his own comic since 1943, the rest started their comic book careers in 1948-50. All had their own titles and proved incredibly popular with the youngsters. All the Fawcett cowboy heroes were clean living, morally upright men who never killed their adversaries, preferring to shoot the bad guy's gun out of his hand if forced into gun-play. Normally the likes of Hopalong Cassidy or Tom Mix would rather settle for a clean cut fist fight with swift uppercuts to the jaw than gunplay.

HA, HA, I OPINE HE'S FALLEN ASLEEP! THIS IS AGONNA BE MIGHTY EASY!
HA, HA! THAR GOES ONE OF YORE HANDS, MIX! AND NOW TUH CUT OFF THE OTHER!
SWISH!
CLUMP
BUT AT THAT MOMENT---
THROW THAT AXE DOWN, DIXON!
HUH ??? TOM MIX--- BUT I JEST KILLED YUH!
YOU JUST CHOPPED THE HANDS OFF OF A STUFFED FIGURE!
YUH WON'T GIT AWAY WITH IT, MIX!
CRASH!
WHIZZ
CONSARN YUH! I JEST CAIN'T MISS YUH THIS TIME!

Tom Mix foils an axe-wielding criminal with a "stuffed figure" of himself. In spite of the fact that the panels depicted the dismemberment of a dummy, Dr. Fredric Wertham took the story and Fawcett to task because of the "disguised" horror content.

SOME LOWDOWN, MURDERIN' VARMEENT

Of all Fawcett's western comics, *Tom Mix* has to be the best in terms of continuity and theme. Tom is a wealthy rancher living in the town of Dobie where he helps the portly sheriff, Mike Shaw, run down the bad guys. Although Dobie is a small town, it has an amazingly high per capita percentage of low-life gunfighters and criminals… all of whom eventually run afoul of Tom Mix in one way or another.

John Jordan and Carl Pfeufer were responsible for the better than average art in almost all the Tom Mix stories. Apart from C.C. Beck whose name appeared as "Chief Artist" at the heading of each comic, Jordan was the only Fawcett artist to be credited with his work (he did Don Winslow as well) in early issues of both titles… and with good reason. Jordan's inking of Pfeufer's drawings was superb and made fight scenes really come alive on the page.

Despite the fact that *Tom Mix* was easily the best Fawcett western, it was also by far the most violent. Nobody could come close. What was truly indestructible was Tom Mix' head. In virtually every story, Mix had his head bashed in with a pistol butt and was knocked cold! Yet this startling western adventurer was never fazed by these considerable cracks on the cranium. In reality, a dozen bashes like the ones Tom received would certainly cause permanent brain damage… but not to our intrepid hero.

Although Mix' adventures were fun, they were also impossible… I mean totally unbelievable! His acrobatic agility defied even the greatest Olympic champion performances. Examples of these impossible feats not found in any other western comic include being thrown off the top of a steep cliff, doing incredible acrobatics in mid-air, and guiding himself to land on a narrow ledge no wider than a size 9 shoe. At least Tom says as he plummets downward: "If there ever was a time for expert acrobatics, this is it!" For the record, this adventure

of impossible gymnastics can be found in issue #16.

In every episode Tom Mix acts like a superhero, literally the wild west's Captain Marvel. But he also got himself into trouble too, at the hands of comicdom's number one nemesis, Dr. Fredric Wertham. Apparently Wertham's ire was aroused when he perused *Tom Mix* #9. In it was a story called (cynically, perhaps) "Hands Off." Consider the plot line that irked the good doctor: Tom arrives back in Dobie carrying a lifelike dummy of himself, given to him by some Indian women. He asks Sheriff Mike Shaw if he can leave the dummy in his office until he goes home. Mike is waiting for "Frisco Frank" the world's greatest trick shot artist who is going to give an exhibition of shooting in Dobie.

The scene cuts to two young boys playing in a creek near Dobie. A box floats toward them. The lads pick it up, open it and "Gulp! It's a pair of human hands... cut off at the wrist!" Shortly after, at Sheriff Mike Shaw's office: "Jumpin' Rattlesnakes," cries Mike. "Some lowdown, murderin' varmeent cut off a pore fellow's hands!" (Note: in all Fawcett western comics, only the hero speaks "educated" English, the rest of the characters are condemned to recite dialogue surely from another planet, including phrases like consarn it, big galute, yore yella, I reckon, plum loco, shore nuff, and the obligatory low-down varmeent!)

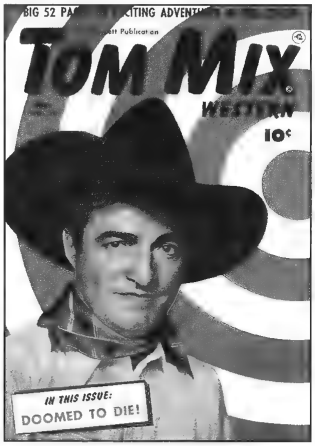
Anyway... Frisco Frank doesn't turn up so Mix and the sheriff go out to look for him. They find his wagon and Frisco Frank on the ground, dead, with his hands cut off. They realize a "madman is on the loose," and decide to keep the grisly find to themselves, telling the two boys to do the same so as not to alarm Dobie residents. To explain away Frisco Frank not turning up, they concoct a story that Frisco wired Mike Shaw to say he was detained, and to have Tom Mix do the show in his place. Tom, of course, puts on a dazzling performance to the crowd's delight (he's not only an expert gymnast, escape artist, trick rider, legal expert, forensic scientist, and insightful detective, (whew) Tom is also a showman and a dead shot with both pistol and rifle!).

After the show, a stranger approaches Tom and asks to see him in private. Curious, Tom obliges, only to get the familiar conk-on-the-skull. Recovering consciousness, Tom finds himself tied by his hands to a tree branch above him. The stranger is quite mad and Tom recognizes him as Deadshot Dixon, one time champion trick shot artist. Dixon readily admits that he hasn't been around for some years because, as he puts it: "...they had me locked up in a loco house!" Dixon goes to a bag and produces a bloodied ax. He grins fiendishly, his intentions made crystal clear to Tom. He'd cut off Frisco Frank's hands because he still wanted to be thought of as the best exhibition shooter in the west, and now he was going to lop off Tom's for the same reason. He swings the ax.

But Tom the miracle man Mix does it again! He swings hard and up, kicking the maniac full force in the chest. "Yuh only postponed yore death a few moments, Mix! I reckon I'll have tuh shoot yuh fust and then cut off yore hands!"

Suddenly a shot rings out blasting the gun from Dixon's hand. It is Sheriff Mike Shaw who found Tom's horse Tony at the edge of the woods and followed the two sets of footprints visible on the ground. But before Shaw can handcuff Dixon, the lunatic clouts him and takes off. Then Tom, now free, has a plan....

Later that evening he gives his cook, Washington, and his ranch hands the night off. He is alone in the house hoping that Dixon will realize he is on his own and be attracted like a moth to a flame... which of course Dixon is. The hand-lopping villain sees Mix asleep in his chair, sneaks into the room, bloody ax in hand. The next picture you see is Dixon slicing off Tom's hand... Clump! But it isn't Tom, after all. It is the dummy the Indian women made for Mix. Yes. It was that lifelike! Mix springs out of a closet and nabs the killer. End of grisly tale.



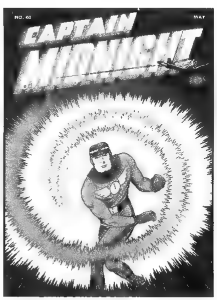
Complete with 10-gallon hat, Tom Mix poses on the striking cover of issue #31 (Jul 1950).

TOTALLY UNFIT FOR IMMATURE MINDS

Wertham was mortified. So much so that he devoted three pages of text in his book, *Seduction of the Innocent,* to the tale. Wertham noted in his article "What are Comic Books?" published for *The National Parent-Teacher Magazine* that so-called "good" comic books such as westerns, were not good at all; they were just crime comics in disguise. Wertham then proceeded to describe the Tom Mix story in full.

According to Wertham, the female editor of TNP-TM was approached by a Fawcett representative and their lawyer. She was told that Fawcett was "considering legal action, that the article was causing the company to lose a million a year, and that it was totally untrue, inaccurate, and libelous." They demanded an immediate public retraction, after explaining the story was about a dummy.

This made Wertham even more angry. He dashed off a letter to the editor explaining the contested tale in full detail. He ended his letter: "Far from retracting what I have written, I reaffirm that this Tom Mix story is a bloody crime story disguised as a "Western" totally unfit for immature minds...." And so on. The letter was not published. Instead, the editor called Fawcett, read the letter to them, then threatened to pub-



After War's end Captain Midnight (#40, May 1946; above) turned his attentions to ghosts, aliens, and mad scientists.

lish it if Fawcett didn't stop threatening her magazine.

That did the trick. Fawcett wrote back saying the Mix story was not representative and had been purchased several years previously, conceding that some comic books on the newsstands "are shocking, a disgrace and probably harmful to children."

Don't faint, but this writer agrees with what Wertham said. The story is graphic and unpleasant, and probably not proper fare for a six or seven year old reader of the day. And while most of Fawcett's western comics were fairly bland, innocuous publications, *Tom Mix* for some extraordinary reason, was not. The comic was extremely violent, quite often over-stepping the "wholesome entertainment" boundaries Fawcett proudly claimed for itself.

This graphic, from This Magazine is Haunted #1 (Oct 1951), is just a teaser for the grizzly fare inside. Fawcett was so fearful of parental condemnation for its horror titles, that it removed its name from the cover after the first issue. TMIH #1 still Guides for less than $150 in FN.

Around the time the controversial Mix story appeared, Fawcett put out a couple of quite interesting one shots. One, entitled *Comics Novel—Anarcho, Dictator of Death* was an interesting experiment in making a completely illustrated novel. The comic appeared in 1947, was 52 pages long with 51 of them devoted to the novel concept and the cover was compelling with its dark figure and red background. Anarcho supported fascism, but the hero was Radar, who championed freedom, and was an international policeman from *Master Comics*.

It was a fair story, quite well drawn, and should have had more sales than it did. There was only one issue and that was that. *Anarcho* still Guides reasonably and is a great acquisition for any collector who enjoys esoteric one-shots.

Pretty Boy Floyd On the Spot (Fall 1948) was another odd Fawcett one shot that featured the action-packed story of gangster Pretty Boy Floyd, one of America's most notorious hoodlums. Even though the artwork is a bit unimaginative and the bondage cover lacks panache, the story is quite well written, and it is one of the more historically interesting post Golden Age entries.

These one shot attempts as Fawcett soldiered on to the end of the decade, did not sustain the company. It was Captain Marvel, Tim Mix, and Hopalong Cassidy that allowed Fawcett comics to survive. But Captain Marvel sales were not what they once were; the days of selling 1.5 million copies per issue were gone. Captain Marvel's roundel in the top left hand corner once proudly proclaimed "the largest circulation of any comic magazine." It was now replaced by the simple words "World's Mightiest Mortal." A generation had grown up… a war had come and gone… and a new media competitor with a round, nine inch screen was invading living rooms across the country.

Another threat to Fawcett as the decade turned to 1950 was Entertaining Comics. Once a ho-hum operation belonging to comics' pioneer Maxwell Gaines, EC (then Educational Comics under Maxwell) produced a few wholesome funnies, including *Picture Stories from the Bible* and *Land of the Lost*. After tragedy struck and Max Gaines died in a boating accident, his son, William Gaines, took over. Looking around, Bill Gaines and his editor, Al Feldstein, saw a gap at the stands, so Gaines launched real horror comics and stole the show….

THIS MAGAZINE IS HAUNTED

Tales from the Crypt, *Haunt of Fear* and *Vault of Horror* raced to the top of the comic market. They were well written, beautifully drawn, and totally different from anything that had gone before. The three titles spawned a host of generally poor imitations, though there were exceptions. Fawcett, for years one of the good guys in comics with the notable exceptions already mentioned, threw discretion to the wind and brought out no less than five horror comics between 1951 and 1952! They were all well written with excellent artwork by Powell and EC mainstay, George Evans.

This Magazine is Haunted was the first Fawcett horror title coming out in October 1951. It featured famous comic artist Shelly Moldoff's character, Dr. Death, who hosted the macabre tales in the book. The first issue had George Evans' art illustrating the story, "The Curse of Carnoc Castle." It was a nice, moody piece drawn with typical Evans' polish. The other tales are well done but don't have quite the flair of Evans.

Interestingly, the first issue of *Haunted* had the logo "A Fawcett Publication" on the cover, and inside the usual list of Fawcett titles accompanying the "Wholesome Entertainment" credo. This was the only Fawcett horror comic to do this; from then on all Fawcett horror and crime books had no identifying marks on the covers.

"Have you ever been too frightened to scream… too terror-stricken to move? This is the sensation that awaits you behind this cover!" This is Dr. Death's invitation to turn the pages of the

second issue of *This Magazine is Haunted*. Once again the superior art of George Evans leads the way with a tale entitled "The Green Hands of Terror." In this classic, two contract killers are returning from a job when a terrible storm blows up. Their car breaks down near a cemetery which the men start hesitantly across. One sees a pair of disembodied legs following them and screams. Finally they come to a large, spooky house near the cemetery. It appears empty so the killers enter. Rats scurry about the floors and one of the men suggests they keep going, that a town cannot be far off.

Suddenly the two evildoers hear the sound of footsteps. They turn and see an odd looking man locking a door. The man discovers he has uninvited company and asks them to leave. Instead, one of the men pulls a gun, saying they want to stay until the storm blows over. Soon the two men fall asleep on an ancient bed but not before one of them says he would like to see what the old man was locking in the room.

As Jenk and Slezak sleep, vile green detached arms come through an open window, grab Jenk round the throat and try to strangle him. He screams, tearing the hands away. At the end of the room are the legs he saw earlier in the cemetery. Slezak is awakened by his partner's screams and thinks he is having a nightmare.

Jenk and Slezak hear a hideous cry from the house owner's room. They rush in to see him being strangled by the green arms. Slezak fires his revolver at the arms which release their grip, scuttling off through the window. Having saved his life, the grateful man tells Jenk and Slezak that he is a chemist working on a "...synthetic protoplasm, trying to create life artificially! And...." he goes on, "I've succeeded!" The only problem, as with many scientific experiments, his work is incomplete; he has only brought life to isolated sections of the human anatomy. "That accounts for those hands! And the legs that Jenk saw," understands Slezak. The man replies: "Yes, but once in a while they break loose! Of late I've had serious trouble because I have created a head! And that one brain directs the limbs with mutinous intent!"

Suffice to say the chemist meets his death at the hands of the detached members, and that the two miscreants suffer hours of horror. The 13 page story finally ends with the house going up in flames, burning all the body parts, and the police arresting Jenk and Slezak for multiple murder. As Dr. Death gleefully says in the last frame: "And after screaming their innocence for endless months of testimony... the ill fated pair met a long deserved fate! Execution at the hands of the law! For you see, Dr. Death... is never the loser!"

Although this particular tale is not the best, George Evans made it memorable via his beautifully atmospheric artwork. There is drama in almost every frame, each which is superbly colored. In 1951, Fawcett vastly improved the coloring in its comics... whether a new colorist was hired or new printers employed, I am not sure, but the result was a vast improvement. In any case, the horror comics did well at least in part because of their excellent art and color. The terrific Bob Powell art in *Haunted* #4 is another example. In the tale "The Blind, the Doomed, and the Dead!" the colorist went to town with Powell's neo classic surrealism. Powell's panel structure is just incredible and a high water mark of comic art!

Two superb tales in *Haunted* #12 make this yet another "must have" Fawcett horror issue. The first, called "The Door," is nightmarish art which I believe had its roots in the British Art Nouveau movement at the end of the last century. Also take a look at Bob Powell's "Wall of Flesh" piece at the end of the comic for exceptional Art Nouveau work, again superbly colored.

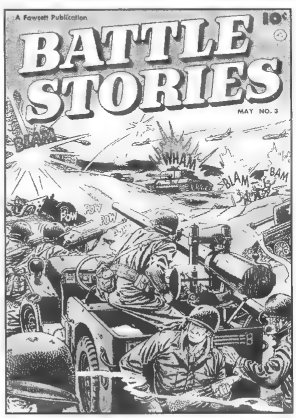
There is little doubt that Bob Powell did some of his best work for Fawcett. Check out the wonderfully sinister story "Ghost Hounds of Trelawney" in *Beware! Terror Tales* #1. Though Powell's art is nothing short of surreal, the atmosphere is such that the reader actually feels like they're in the panels, under the full moon awaiting the pounce of slathering hounds. As for the splash page, this is the stuff kiddies' nightmares are made of. A true classic if there ever was one.

Captain Video #1 (Feb 1951) began the six issue run based on the popular early 1950s Dumont television program. The title featured such classics as "The Missiles of Doom!" and "The Island of Conquerors."

Many collectors are unaware that Fawcett, like many other publishers of the early 1950s, cashed in on war comics. Shown here is Battle Stories #3 (May 1952).

TV, CRIME, & WAR

None of Fawcett's new wave of comics that came out between 1950 thru 1952, lasted very long. *This Magazine is Haunted* stretched to 14 issues before Charlton Publications bought the title when Fawcett closed shop in 1953. The highly collectible Fawcett horror books are few in number... only eight issues of *Beware! Terror Tales*, zero issues of *Worlds of Fear*, and only five of *Strange Stories From Another World*.



In spite of the demise of Fawcett horror, George Evans went on to do another company gem that is now legendary of collectors of TV-related memorabilia... *Captain Video*. Fawcett got the rights to do a comic book version of the popular TV sci-fi drama, the first issue dated February 1951. Obviously the comic wasn't as popular as the televi- *(Continued on page 79)*

The New Overstreet Price Guide Update is Out!

For every person I talk to that is saying "the sky is falling," others tell me they are doing extremely well. The variables seem to be the new Overstreet Silver Age Price Update, customer service and available books, and the reports of new collectors coming out for certain Silver and Bronze Age books. First, the Guide has apparently done a surprisingly accurate and excellent job describing the state of the market, reporting the reduced value of lower grade material. This is sparking increased consumer confidence (as it should) and causing a flurry of interest from collectors.

Second, dealers who are trying to sell the same books that everyone else is hawking, have to be either very likable and/or very polite... or they have to have great prices. But new Update/state of the market or not... those that have in-demand books are still calling their own shots. Many think that it just got too easy to sell things there for a while, and our hobby is now returning to business as usual.

Third, some are now reporting new collectors coming out for Silver Age, while others continue to quickly sell every 1950's book they can locate. And the latest rage is inexpensively priced material from the early 1970s in higher grade... some are even specializing in the rapidly expanding demand and finding great success as dealers and great satisfaction as collectors. That's because like 1950's books, 1970's material offers an amazing variety of genres and "esoteric" titles and spin-offs.

Golden Age (1933-45)

As the dynamic of collecting changes almost weekly, some are taking advantage of discounting in some areas, while other high grade books are still selling at multiples, and also selling rather briskly. Some are reflecting upon the past few years and coming to the conclusion that many Mile High books are just not going to come onto the market. If huge profits over this time are not going to shake loose these books, what will? That realization has collectors taking a look at other high grade material. Sure, not many are risking the big bucks on speculation in an unproven genre, but what a great time to search out those obscure #1s, and high grade issues. Has the huge market for low grade keys evaporated yet? Not by a long shot!

Sales: Action #8 GD $725; All Select #2 GD $400, #5 VG $310; All Star #8 PR #990; Detective #38 FR $975; Eagle #2 FN $310; Famous Funnies #27 FN/VF $200; Fighting Yank #2 VF $595; Four Color #12 VF $250; Gene Autry #11 VF/NM $390; Green Mask v2 #1 VF $200; Jumbo #4 GD $480; Speed Comics #1 GD $450; Startling #1 VG $500; Thrilling #19 FN $175.

Atom Age (1946-1956)

Remember Matt Nelson's great "Unseen Gold" articles and all the attention brought to those books? One can only imagine the covers of the "unseen" books from this era. Just think of those Fox Romance books, those pre-Code horror and crime covers, and even some of the classic westerns. Collectors are still looking especially for great covers not pictured in Gerber and for those covers that many have just never seen before. Good luck finding these books, as competition is heating up.

Sales: Detective #156 FN $245; Jann of the Jungle #8 (#1) VF $185; Jungle Thrills #16 VF $310; Li'l Abner #61 (#1) GD $65; Lover's Lane #1 VF/NM $225; Men's Adventure #25 FN $75; Movie Comics #2 (Fiction House) VF $280; Patsy Walker #37 NM $70; Pep #66 VF/NM $150; Phantom Lady #5 (#1) GD $125; Sad Sack #1 FN $160; Seven Seas #6 GD $195; Spectacular Stories #4 NM $475; Strange Fantasy #7 FN $90.

Silver Age (1956-69)

Everyone seems to be talking about Silver; what is hot or not, what it should Guide for, where is the *Continued on page 75*

ROB ROHIN • VINTAGE INVESTMENTS ASSOC.
P.O. BOX 354
EASTPOINTE, MI 48021
1-888-VIA-BUYS

We are happy to have this opportunity to share the following information with our fellow collectors and dealers.

From our view, the market (at present) seems characterized by a series of fits and starts. Individual pieces in high grade still bring multiples of Guide, but the overall enthusiasm and competition for books that characterized the late eighties through the mid nineties, seems to be lagging.

The reasons for this are straightforward: the stock market has presented an unrivaled investment venue, causing most areas of collectibles to soften; the *Overstreet Guide* prices of many popular titles have increased so dramatically in the past several years that they have reached a natural, if temporary, plateau; and, a "herd mentality" exists in which individuals are hesitant to commit resources to the hobby when they perceive others hesitating to invest. Such conservatism is understandable. However, while others wait, now is an excellent time to obtain desirable material as it comes on the market. Savvy collectors are paying significant sums for desirable books. Amazing Spider-Man #60 NM $225; Blue Beetle #53 VF+ $700; Captain America #19 VG $440, Catman #2 GD/VG $325; Daredevil #1 NM $3,300; Detective #185 NM $450; Green Lantern #96 NM $195; Ironman #1 NM $535. JLA #9 NM $450; Jo-Jo #16 VF+ $495; Killers #2 VG+ $225; Pep #17 FR $240. Sales of books from the 'Western Pennsylvania' collection include: Strange Tales #111 NM $750; Tales to Astonish #37 NM $830 #43 NM $375, #50 NM $300, #51 NM $300, and #59 NM $425.

IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, WE HAVE

$PENT MILLION$

BUYING COMIC BOOKS

WE HAVE PURCHASED
MANY INDIVIDUAL BOOKS
AS WELL AS MANY
OF THE MAJOR COLLECTIONS
SOLD IN NORTH AMERICA
OVER THE PAST
FEW YEARS

CALL TODAY
FOR IMMEDIATE,
NO NONSENSE,
RESPONSE!

SHOWCASE
NEW ENGLAND™

BOOKS SHOWN BY APPOINTMENT ONLY • WEEKDAYS 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. E.S.T.
CALL DANIEL GREENHALGH TODAY
CBG Customer Service Award 1994-1997
Member AACC Authenticity, Certification, & Grading Committee
(Christie's Auction) 1994-1997 (Sotheby's Auction)1995; Special Advisor to Overstreet Annual 1995-1997

4 CENTER STREET • WALLINGFORD, CT 06492 • (203) 265-3466 FAX (203) 265-6991

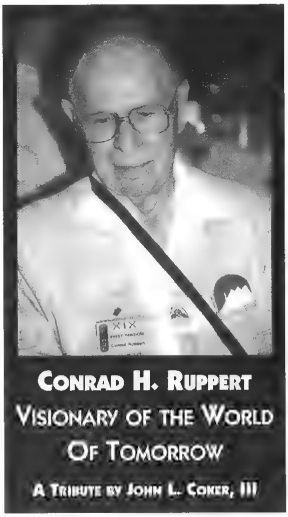
Conrad H. Ruppert, pioneering science fiction fan, died on August 28, 1997, at the age of eighty four. Regarded as one of the last of the early fans, he made numerous contributions to modern science fiction fandom from the late-1920s until the early 1940s… but he will probably best be remembered as a photographer and provider of printing services.

Ruppert described being able to witness the transformation of science and technology from when he first read of the marvels of television and rockets in the early ScientiFiction magazines in the 1920s, to the reality of watching a live broadcast of Neil Armstrong walking on the moon in the summer of 1969 as "the thrill of a lifetime."

"Connie" Ruppert was born on November 12, 1912, in Brooklyn, New York. As a boy, Connie enjoyed reading the adventures of King Arthur and Tom Swift. When he was ten years old, he was confined to bed for ten days with rheumatic fever, and among the magazines provided by his mother was an issue of *Science and Invention*, published by Hugo Gernsback. It was here that Connie first experienced the sense of wonder which was to last a lifetime. He began reading every issue of the magazine that he could find, and when he was twelve years old, he applied for a card which made him a *Science and Invention* reporter. He wrote a number of articles for the magazine, several of which Gernsback published. Over the next few years, Ruppert spent a lot of time in the public library reading as much science fiction as he could find, especially the works of H. G. Wells and Jules Verne.

During 1929-30 while studying electrical engineering at Indiana's Tri State College, Ruppert maintained an active correspondence with Raymond A. Palmer and Walter Dennis. As part of a campaign to promote a "Science Fiction Week" in 1930, Ruppert convinced newspapers in several major cities to run editorials in support of the idea. At about the same time, Gernsback was sponsoring a contest to recognize people for contributions to science fiction, and though Ruppert hadn't even heard about the contest, Gernsback awarded him a second prize of fifty dollars.

Soon afterwards, while working as an assistant in his father's bakery, Ruppert bought a small hand press. With his friend Donald Alexander, he formed ARRA Publishers, and began printing small booklets. They bought rights to reprint Merritt's *Through The Dragon Glass*, and released it as their first publication. Shortly thereafter, Connie received a mimeographed copy of *The Time Traveller*, science fiction's first fan magazine. Ruppert contacted editor Allen Glasser, and after several meetings, they agreed that he would begin printing the magazine, starting with the third issue (March 1932). Ruppert's production values greatly enhanced the appearance of the fledgling magazine, which led to an



increase in the number of subscriptions and attracted the interest of many established writers, who were inspired to contribute material to the magazine free of charge.

During 1932-35, Ruppert produced some of the finest periodicals in the history of science fiction. He lovingly set the type by hand for several more of the monthly issues of *The Time Traveller*, then with Julius Schwartz, Mort Weisinger, Raymond A. Palmer and Forrest J. Ackerman, went on to produce other legendary fan magazines such as *Science Fiction Digest*, which eventually became *Fantasy Magazine*. During the same period, Ruppert printed all eighteen issues of Charles D. Hornig's monthly magazine *The Fantasy Fan*, the quality of which so impressed Gernsback that he offered Hornig an editorial position with *Wonder Stories*. In addition to his duties as printer, Ruppert was at various times columnist, editor, advisor, and business partner in these pioneering fan enterprises.

In 1934, Ruppert had an idea of doing a comic strip about a super being, and he approached artist Clay Ferguson, Jr. about working on it. Ruppert wanted a strip where he would supply character development and story line, and Ferguson would illustrate it. The premise featured a young man from another solar system who fell in love with the princess of a planet. The king opposed this relationship and decided that the young man's punishment would be to be made immortal. The man and the princess were banished to the outermost planet, where they lived until his wife and children died. Over time, he gained extraordinary strength and exceptional mental powers, and traveled from planet to planet, doing good. They prepared a few strips to sell the idea, they could find no publisher. After some time, they abandoned the idea.

By the mid-1930s, other commercial opportunities made it increasingly difficult for Ruppert to donate time each month to typesetting these magazines, and after *Fantasy Magazine*'s Third Anniversary issue, William Crawford took on the printing responsibilities. However, Connie remained active in science fiction, and attended important meetings and regional conferences through the late 1930s, where he established friendships with such luminaries as H. P. Lovecraft, David A. Keller, Otto Binder, A. Merritt, Frank Belknap Long, Jr., Otis Adelbert Kline and Arthur J. Burk, and met aspiring young writers such as Asimov, Heinlein, and Bradbury.

In 1936, following the death of Stanley G. Weinbaum, the Milwaukee Fictioneers (with Schwartz and Weisinger) decided to issue a memorial volume. Palmer managed most of the production, and although Ruppert was busy with other obligations, he printed the volume at cost, and on quality paper using leather binding with gold stamping.

In 1939, Julius Schwartz approached Ruppert about printing a souvenir journal for the first World Science Fiction Convention, which was to be held on July 4th in New York, and together they sold enough advertisements to raise the sixty dollars needed for the cost of printing. Connie produced a beautiful program book with a gold metallic cover and interior artwork by Guest of Honor Frank R. Paul. On the morning of the convention, Ruppert took his camera and stood outside of the hall with

Schwartz to photograph the professionals and noted fans as they arrived.

It was during this same summer in New York City that Ruppert took extensive pictures at the 1939 World's Fair, the theme being "The World Of Tomorrow." Knowing that his involvement in fandom was waning at the same time that a war in Europe was brewing, the utopian vision of the 1939 World's Fair certainly must have seemed to Ruppert to be the culmination of all of his efforts in science fiction over the past fifteen years.

After selling his printing business in 1941, Ruppert was drafted into the U S Army in April 1942, and received a medical discharge fourteen months later. After returning home to work and raise a family, there was not much time to devote to fandom, although he continued to read science fiction. His passion for color photography led him to begin taking scenic pictures and making 16MM films, and in doing so, he preserved for future generations the vanishing images of Eastern Long Island.

Over the years, Connie received recognition for his award-winning pictures and he enjoyed putting on photo exhibitions and giving slide shows in the public schools. In 1989, thirty of Ruppert's photographs of the 1939 World's Fair were showcased in a book entitled *The World of Tomorrow.*

Then, after a fifty-year hiatus from science fiction, Conrad attended the 50th World Science Fiction Convention in 1992, where he enjoyed a reunion with Julius Schwartz, Forrest J. Ackerman, Sam Moskowitz, and others. This event rejuvenated Ruppert, and he became involved in fandom again. During the last five years of his life, he renewed his written correspondence with long-time friends, assembled a set of his early publications, and began going to conventions and attending First Fandom reunions.

In April 1994, Ruppert received the Raymond Z. Gallun Award from I-Con at Stony Brook University, New York, and in May of the same year he had thirty-two of his photographs of the 1939 World's Fair "showing science as a promoter and entertainer" featured as part of a major permanent exhibition entitled "Science in American Life" at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

Fandom founder and pioneer, Connie Ruppert, will be sorely missed!

SCHIFFMAN *(Cont. from page 72)*

market heading, and is it growing with new collectors? It certainly is no secret to readers of CBM that if you really want a particular book in a certain grade, it can be had with a few phone calls. Thus, a premium on anything but the top NM or undervalued books is not finding much reception. Then it comes down to dealer reputation and local retail stores to promote this material.

The exceptions are Spectre, Brave & Bold, Strange Adventures, Mystery In Space, pre Space Ranger Unexpected, House of Mystery/House Of Secrets/My Greatest Adventure with Kirby covers and stories, and pre-hero Marvel… all of these are doing well, even in mid grades. Interest in DC's six Silver Age mystery/sci fi titles is swelling. So the question of the season is "what does one do with a FN Hulk #103 for $29?"

Sales: Avengers #57 $100; Batman #176 VF/NM $72; Daredevil #1 GD $150; Flash #123 GD $120; GI Combat #87 FN $175; Green Lantern #59 FN $95; House of Mystery #173 NM $30; Iron Man #1 GD $45; Journey into Mys. #116 NM $85; JLA #46 VF $65.00; Magnus #1 FN $145 ; Our Army at War #83 GD $140; Spectre #1 NM $100; Submariner #1 NM $98; Tales of Suspense #39 GD $425; Thor #163 NM $20; X-Men #1 GD $420, #8 NM $260.

Bronze Age (1970-79)

We all know just how much of an effect the Gerber Journals have had on Gold and post-Gold books, so it's easy to see why so many Bronze Age collectors are gearing up for the new installments. Being able to see the covers of many of the most sought-after books will likely increase demand. Yes, some of the Horror/Mystery House Of Secrets and House of Mystery covers are incredible, and are being avidly pursued. Also, the majority of the specimens of these two titles from this era are not in high grade so better condition copies are bringing amazing premiums. Additionally, Super DC Giants are "under the hunt" … how many have ever seen a nice copy of Super DC Spectacular #17? Me neither. The DC 52 and 48 pagers in high grade are now in extreme demand.

Two more points of note… the wonderful Marvel comic ephemera from the late '60s and early '70s is finding a very receptive audience and the grading of 100 page books is now in question. We've all seen the horrendous binding defects (usually shrunken glue at the spine) but how does one grade these when the rest of the book is in NM?

Sales: Adventure #428 VF $18; Chamber of Chills #1 NM #14; Daredevil #158 NM $50; Flash #214 FN $14; Ghosts #1 VF/NM $85; Hulk #181 NM $625; Invaders #1 NM $12; Iron Fist #14 NM $120; Iron Man #54 NM $25; Rawhide Kid Special #1 NM $24; Ringo Kid #1 NM $15; Secret Origins #1 NM $14; DC 100 pg.; Shazam #8 NM $25; Star Spangled War Stories #151 NM $165; Super Spectacular #5 VG $138; Thor #200 $25; Weird Wonder Tales #1 NM $10; Where Monsters Dwell #1 NM $20.

Thanks Ernie Gerber!

Every once in a while it dawns on me just how important the Gerber Journals are for collectors. Sure there are a few old timers that saw all of this stuff at one point, or if you lived in a major metro area you were more exposed than most. But for a small town guy like me, the Journals were extremely important to my comic book education and actually directed my collecting habits. Would most of us have known that Suspense #3 sports a better cover than #2 without Gerber? Would we have discovered icon books like Phantom Lady #17 and Startling #49 without the Photo-Journals? I don't think so.

The Photo-Journals have caused the hobby to evolve, this while the majority of collectors simply do not (or cannot) collect "runs" any longer. The visual image on the cover has now become a significant force in the hobby, and is a major market factor. This trend has gotten stronger in the last decade and will not likely abate in the foreseeable future as the Gerber books continue to stoke interest in cover collecting. ■

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

Advertising Rates

The Best Ad Rates in Town!

FULL PAGE AD
(7 1/8 WIDE X 9 5/8" TALL)
$400.00

HALF PAGE HORIZONTAL
(7 1/8 WIDE X 4 5/8" TALL)
$300.00

THIRD PAGE VERTICAL
(2 1/4 WIDE X 9 1/4" TALL)
$235.00

QUARTER PAGE
(4 5/8 WIDE X 3 3/4" TALL)
$190.00

Contract advertisers—
ask for your discount.

Above rates are for black & white camera-ready ads. Include payment with ad copy and forward to the address below. The ad deadline is the 10th of every month. Rate Card and further information available upon request.

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE
C/O GEMSTONE PUBLISHING, INC.
P.O. BOX 188700
CORONADO • CA • 92178-0700

CONTACT: MICHAEL NAIMAN

619 • 465 • 2669
FAX
619 • 698 • 6695

MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 9

Flaw #3: "The lowering of cover prices and production values would increase comic sales." If that were true then why didn't 'Untold Tales of Spider-Man'—a comic that had excellent stories, art, and a very recognizable character as well as a cover price ($1.00) that is half the average cost of most comics, sell hundreds of thousands of copies?

Flaw #4: "Back issues cost too much." I can identify with this complaint as much as anyone, but we have no one else to blame but ourselves. On one hand we constantly fight to secure comic books, their creators and characters a place of respect in history, yet we complain when we are the victims of our own PR, the comic book market isn't any different than any other in that the price charged is what the market will bear.

Flaw #5: "The complaints from retailers about so called dumping of recent comics at shows." Some promoters have even limited or prohibited this practice at conventions. These are the same retailers and promoters that constantly say that new comics are overpriced but then object when they are sold for their true market value.

Flaw #6: "The constant ridiculing of pedigree and High Grade collectors." These collectors/investors are genuinely providing a service to fellow collectors by buying and maintaining the best preserved copies in existence for future generations. Obviously after spending the multiples of Guide for their acquisitions they will not alter these books with restoration or careless storage.

In closing I would point out that many comic readers/collectors (myself included) are dazed and confused concerning their future with comics and learning to live with the monster we helped create. Hopefully, we can put aside our competitiveness to own the best, rarest or most prestigious… in order to enjoy comics for what they are and figure out a way to let everyone else in on the secret.

Shawn Hamilton, Kentucky

Greg White Is Right

Just wanted to agree with Greg White's assessment of the current market. he's right. It's dying right in front of our eyes. Prices must change drastically if we are ever to see real movement again in the comic field. The Golden Age of comic book retailing is over, the bust is occurring, and high prices just won't cut it anymore. From teenagers on up, collectors are spending their money on other forms of entertainment, and unless we can make back issues (more than the past 10 years) affordable, we may just lose the entire market.

The decline in interest of older comics as seen at San Diego and Chicago this year can only be a precursor for next year's shows. Neither convention has any interest in old comics, only media merchandise, new comics and products. What is needed now, more than ever, is a show that has only Golden Age/Silver Age dealers. Don Maris has successfully had twice yearly toy shows that exclude modern toys, and his show has been running for more than 10 years.

We need a comic show… no magic cards, no Star Wars toys, no modern comics. A strong old comics show could do a lot to revive the back issue industry.

Bart Bush, Oklahoma

Could it be?

I greatly enjoyed Michelle Nolan's article, "DC's Forgotten Forty-Four," in CBM #51, since it touches on a number of topics that fascinate me as well. A few comments:

1) In the article, Michelle wrote, "A few say the Silver Age started with Superman's Girl Friend Lois Lane #1 in 1958. You can make a case for that, because that title was the first new superhero comic DC began since Superboy #1 nearly a decade earlier." Could it be Michelle has forgotten Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen #1, which debuted four years earlier than Lois Lane #1? I would think Jimmy Olsen's Silver Age credentials would have more cachet than Lois Lane's, both because it predates Showcase #4 and Detective #225, and because the title already had its Silver Age format down pat in the mid-1950s.

2) Michelle also wrote that the Flash "was the only new comic book DC started in 1959." She should've read further in her own article! Pat Boone also started in 1959.

3) My experiences with the so-called "Forgotten Forty Four" appears to be the exact opposite of Michelle's. Precisely because these issues come so late in their respective titles' runs, those issues are easier to find than the earlier issues, and much less expensive.

4) Finally, Michelle wrote that Many Loves Of Dobie Gillis replaced A Date With Judy on the DC schedule; actually, Dobie replaced Sgt. Bilko (which was only fitting, since the "Dobie Gillis" TV show debuted on CBS the same month "The Phil Silvers Show" was canceled).

On a separate topic, the Overstreet Price Guide lists Showcase #43 (March/April 1963), featuring "Dr. No," as "1st DC Silver Age movie adapta-

tion." Perhaps this is so if we limit ourselves to just the action/adventure genre. However, there are at least two Jerry Lewis films that I know of that were adapted in The Adventures Of Jerry Lewis, and that pre-date Showcase #43: "The Ladies Man" appears in Jerry Lewis #66 (Sep/Oct 1961), while Jerry Lewis #74 (Jan-Feb '63) adapts "It's Only Money." Clearly, then, "Dr. No" is NOT the first DC Silver Age movie adaptation. The question remains, though, whether Jerry Lewis #66 is the first time DC adapted a Jerry Lewis movie. Best,

Dave Blanchard, Ohio

Bizzaro Musings!

There is no denying the fact that Bizarro, that backwards-thinking oddball of the Superman Universe had made an impression on me lasting nearly forty years! Bizarro—DC's effort to "cash-in" on the resurgence of the great Universal Monsters on our viewing screens during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Bizarro—the ultimate "square peg in a round hole" with a strangely understandable "sense of humor" all his own!

And so, my latest comic "quest" was clear—(I can still hear my wife's "sighs of pity"—the kind that only a tolerant and loving spouse can provide—when I informed her that I had just spent $225 for a copy of Aquaman #1)—to trace as many of Bizarro's appearances throughout the D.C. universe.

So, with the aid of my trusty Overstreet Guide (26th edition) here, are the fruits of my labor, (I'm sure many comic book "historians" will be able to fill in the gaps of those appearances that I've missed):

1. Superboy #68 (1st appearance)
2. Action comics #254
3. Action Comics #255
4. Action Comics #263 (Origin)
5. Superboy #82 (Krypto)
6. Adventure Comics #285
7. Adventure Comics #286
8. Superman #140 (Supergirl)
9. Superman Annual #2
10. Adventure Comics #287 (Jimmy Olsen)
11. Adventure Comics #292 (Lana Lang)
12. Adventure Comics #293 (Lex Luthor)
13. Adventure Comics #294 (Kennedy/Monroe)
14. Adventure Comics #295 (Titano)
15. Adventure Comics #329 (Bizarro Legionaires)
16. Superman #162 (Bizarro Invasion of Earth)
17. Superman #202
18. World's Finest #156 (Bizarro Batman)
19. Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane #74
20. Superman (2nd Series) #88

P.S.–Speaking of the wonderful "hybridization" of fantastic literature and great comic art—your reprint of Al Williamson's magnificent "take" on the Ray Bradbury short story on the cover of CBM #51 says it all for me!!

Bob Kratky, New Jersey

Archie esoterics

Pleased to see the extensive coverage of Archie comics in CBM #52. Dan DeCarlo's cover was both clever and up to his usual high standards. I enjoyed Paul Castiglia's "Esoteric Archie!" article. It shows that the Archie line did a lot of experimenting with different titles and concepts through the years. He left out perhaps one of the best of the Archie esoterics—Madhouse, and it's short-lived companion book, Bats. Although Madhouse featured the Archie gang, they often were put in strange, weird or "other world" situations. Bats featured a variety of monster and monster-type characters, some of which were vampires and werewolves, both forbidden by the Comics Code Authority—a policing agency founded with the help of John Goldwater.

I felt that Jeffrey Branch's overview of the Archie line was short on history and grounded mostly in the last 10-12 years of the company. He is correct, however, that Archie always has been a typical bandwagon comic book company—jumping on the latest trends, from the hula hoop and superheroes to draft evaders and child abuse. It succeeded in doing this in many ways because of the tried and true Archie characters it used to promote the latest fad.

However, Jeff seems short on specifics about the origin of Archie and those who participated in it. While the general understanding is that John Goldwater arrived at the office one day with the idea, the expansion of that idea and development of the characters and their personalities can most often be attributed to writer/artist Bob Montana and editor Harry Shorten.

In fact, there was little mention of the talented and loyal staff of writers and artists who, through the years, help mold this line of funny books into an American icon. I wish Jeff would have credited Shorten, Montana, Bill Vigoda, Harry Lucey, Hy Vigoda, Frank Doyle, Samm Schwartz, Bob Bolling, Bob White, George Gladir, George Freese, Joe Edwards, Stan Goldberg, Don DeCarlo, Stan Goldberg and others—many of whom still write and draw for the company today.

As most collectors know, value of certain books are enhanced by artists (and sometimes writers). This is true of the Archie line. Even though some of these men drew maybe thousands of Archie stories over the years, their craft never diminished. Shorten, perhaps, was one of the finest editors in the history of the industry; Freese, Lucey and Bill Vigoda were the workhorses of the line in the 1940s, '50s and '60s. Bolling is as fine a writer and artist as has ever worked in the business, and it's hard to ignore the legacy of Doyle, Goldberg and DeCarlo.

Does any CBM reader know who created Archie's Sabrina the Teenage Witch, now a successful TV show? George Gladir supposedly came up with the idea, even though he is not credited in the comic book or on the television show.

This is not meant to undercut Jeff's lengthy piece and the importance of the Archie Group of comic books to our hobby. I suspect that Archie is one of the top five most recognizable comic creations ever, right up there with Superman, Mickey Mouse, Batman and Donald Duck. It's about time he and his "good ol' gang" of writers and artists get the recognition they've truly earned.

Gary F. Brown, Florida

Thanks to everyone who took the time to write... we really enjoy your letters! Please note letters maybe edited for content and space. Please send your correspondence to: CBM's Marketplace Mail, P.O. Box 180700, Coronado, CA 92178 or FAX (619) 437-1993 Email us at: cbm@gemstonepub.com

PCE
PACIFIC COMIC EXCHANGE INC.
DEC 27 60 $ 90000
TM

Over $2,000,000 in Inventory!
Call for Free Catalog
PACIFIC COMIC EXCHANGE, INC.
http://www.pcei.com • E-mail:info@pcei.com

Accepting Consignments
on Golden & Silver Age Comics
and Original Art

Corporate Office:
337 S. Roberston Blvd., Suite 203
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
Tel. (310) 836-7234

Shipping Address:
P.O. Box 34849
Los Angeles, CA 90034
Fax (310) 836-7127

WONDER WOMAN ITEMS WANTED!

I will pay ridiculously high prices for the following items in VF-NM Condition Only!

1. 1942 Sensation Comics/Wonder Woman Button
2. 1943 March of Dimes Wonder Woman Card
3. 1942,1944 & 1948 Junior Justice Society Membership Kits
4. 1940's "Globe Holding" Wonder Woman Valentines Card
5. 1966 Ideal Wonder Woman/Flash figure set (Mint on card)
6. 1960's Wonder Woman eye glasses (childrens)
7. 1966 Ideal Wonder Woman & Batgirl Super Queens dolls

Also want any 1940's,50's, 60's Wonder Woman magazine articles, promos & original artwork. Even if you have these items in less than VF condition let me know, but otherwise I will pay *way over* value!

Barry Kraus • (212) 242-2654 • 34 Morton St. Apt. 5C • NYC, NY 10014

TOYS from the 50's INC
I DREAM of JEANNIE

Specializing in 1960's Television Show Toys Lunch Boxes, Halloween Costumes, Comics & Games

Peter & Christine Lutrario
110 West 25th St. Ste 805
New York, NY 10001

(212) 352-9182
www.toys-50s.com

TREASURES OF YOUTH BY SCOTT

1201 C Street, Hayward, CA 94541
510 • 888 • 9675
Mon.-Fri. 2:00-7:00 • Sat. 11:00-6:30 • Sun. Please Call
Toys, Comics, Cards & Collectibles
Scott McAdam
Owner

DAVE SMITH
FANTASY ILLUSTRATED

- OVER 20 YEARS IN THE BUSINESS -
Specializing in Golden Age and Pulps
Catalogs Issued
(206)784-7300 • FAX (206)782-2844
PO Box 30183 Seattle, WA 98103

Best Comics Hobby Center
Authorized Dealer of Lionel Trains
We Buy & Sell Silver/Golden Age Comics
New Comics • Action Figures • Trading Cards • Star Wars/Star Trek • Vinyl Model Kits • Lmtd. Ed. Statues • Toy Collectables • Resin Kits & Paint Supplies

252-02 Northern Blvd.
Little Neck, New York 11362
TOMMY MALETTA
(718) 279-2099 • (Fax) 279-2216
http://www.bestcomics.com

SELLING YOUR COLLECTION?

Hear the call of ...
Redbeard's Book Den
- Honest, friendly and reliable service
- Backed by LARGE lines of credit at major Banks
- 20 years in business

Redbeard's Book Den
P.O. Box 217 • Crystal Bay, NV 89402-0217
Phone (702) 831-4848 • FAX (702) 831-4483

Special Artist Comics

Over 60 Top Artists in 1300+ (1947-59) Medium Grade
3000+ (60's onward - all titles) High Grade Condition!

Comics for Sale!

Also many fanzines!
Priced well below Overstreet • Strictly Graded/Guaranteed
write for full list
Ken McDaniel
513 Pensacola Drive • Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Continued from page 71

sion show, which is a shame. The stories were well written and Evans' artwork every bit as good as anything he did for EC. One story, from #2 caught Dr. Wertham's eye and was "honored" with a place in *SOTI*. Wertham attacked a story in which man loses the use of his legs. The evil perpetrator of this deed, a Dr. Pauli, wants a million dollars per person to make them walk again. Needless to say, Captain Video saves the day after 13 pages of adventure.

Why Wertham axed *Captain Video* is beyond me. He calls the comic a crime comic and accuses it of a lot of "assorted violence." Actually, there's more violence in a *Donald Duck* comic than there is in *Captain Video*. Although I often sympathize with some of Wertham's more noble ideals, there were times he went way too far... and *Captain Video* is one of those times. There were only six issues of *Video* and every one is well worth its *Guide* price.

On the crime front, Fawcett had a couple of interesting titles. Both *Underworld Crime* and *Down with Crime* were formula comics with neither the art or stories to support them. Neither title lasted very long. *Mike Barnett, Man Against Crime* was a private eye in the wise cracking Philip Marlowe mold but nowhere near as good. *Mike Barnett* wasn't that bad but the title needed a better artist. After six so-so issues, *Mike Barnett* disappeared.

Going by his war comics, it's pretty obvious that W. H. Fawcett Jr. was a patriot. *Battle Stories* and *Soldier Comics* were two of the most gung-ho war titles you can find anywhere. They came out during the Korean war when "reds were under every bed," McCarthy was in power, and anti-commie hysteria was at its height.

Even so, *Battle Stories* occasionally had stories of note, as in issue #2. A story titled "Bird of Prey" drawn by Bob Powell sports great illustrations with unusual and effective panels. This pre-Code war book is one to consider.

Battle Stories #5 is also noteworthy,because of its over-the-top propaganda story "They've Got To Kill Me." Drawn by the artist who drew Rod Cameron Western (who is that?) the story is rich in clever panel design and those wonderful sound effect words so prevalent in war comics. Fawcett even invented a few new ones... "Harroosh!" "ssssSSSWWRRR!" "Sachwoinggg!" "P-Taouwww!" "Poinggg!" Even Harvey Kurtzman who liked to pepper his vastly superior EC war comics with sound effect words, would have enjoyed Fawcett's new armada of war-comic onomatopoeia!

THE END OF FAWCETT COMICS

Even though the publisher gave it a great try, the 13-year Golden Age of Fawcett comics eventually came to an end. The coffin was built by Dr. Wertham, and the nails set by DC. Late in 1953, Fawcett threw in the towel. It had had enough. Not that sales were all that bad; the company was holding its own. But Fawcett decided to get out while still ahead, settled with National out of court, and that was the end of that. Captain Marvel flew over the hills to disappear into the sunset beyond, and one of America's greatest comic publishing companies was gone.

A generation grew up with Captain Marvel and all his Fawcett friends: a lucky generation who had thirteen wonderful years of the Marvel Family.

And although attempts to revive the "Big Red Cheese" and his clan have met with little success—most likely due to changing times and tastes—the Fawcett comics and characters of the '40s and '50s are still enthusiastically collected today. There is still power in the magic word Shazam, if not enough to change a boy into a superhero, surely enough to transport a reader to one of the most charming four-color worlds of fantasy adventure.

RESTORATION 101 *(Continued from page 80)*

work on one tape adhesive will not necessarily work on another. Sometimes different types of tape are used on the same book creating all sorts of problems. And while most tape adhesives are soluble in solvents similar to alcohol, dry cleaning fluid (carbon tetrachloride), or camping fuel (white gasoline)—SO ARE THE PRINTING INKS! Removing the tape might remove all of the color or dissolve the image altogether... and therein lies the problem. In order to determine which solvent is going to be effective in dissolving and removing the adhesive, testing must be done directly on the comic book. As one of my instructors was fond of saying "in for a penny, in for a pound."

Tape removal is never without risk. While it can progress rather quickly with little or no further damage, that is rarely the case. Removal of the image, skimming of the paper, tearing, loss of ink intensities, solvent staining, and loss of surface texture due to the removal of the surface coating... these are all potential destructive side-effects of tape removal. When any of these happen, additional work is usually done to remove or correct the damage inflicted by the tape removal process. This additional work is often in the form of infilling and inpainting... thus raising the cost of the restoration for the client and (for some) reducing the esthetic value of the comic.

Since the potential for increased damage due to inexperience or improper technique can be quite high, I always recommend that tape removal be done by a professional archival paper conservator... someone with enough training and experience to quickly recognize when tape and its staining cannot be safely removed without severe damage to the comic book. This will prevent needless or extraneous work from being done, save the client time and money, and preserve as much of the original comic book as possible.

Leaving the tape on the book will eventually result in heavy staining, the extent of this can be reduced through proper storage. In contrast, forceful removal of an adhesive that has cross-linked will result in severe damage and degradation to the original book which will then need further reparation.

The decision, of course, is ultimately in the hands of the owner.

COMING NEXT MONTH IN CBM

CBM Collector's Exclusive...

Dazzlin' Denny O'Neil

plus: A Comic Book Marketplace Classic

Neal Adams... the DC Years!

A Sticky Problem

THE COMPLEX PROCESS OF TAPE REMOVAL

Since it's creation in 1845, pressure-sensitive tape has been used to repair almost everything under the sun, especially paper. But it was the technological advancements of 3M in 1950 that caused tape usage to become widespread—for this was the year that Scotch brand No. 810 Magic Mending Tape was created. 3M currently manufactures somewhere in the vicinity of 1,000 different types of pressure sensitive tapes, most of which have been used on comic books at one time or another.

When it was initially created, concerns about long-term stability and reversibility were non-existent. In fact, company literature in 1961 stated that "No. 810 is very stable, in that both adhesive and backing are, for all practical purposes, inert; The backing being acetate film, it is not affected by changes in temperature and/or humidity; The adhesive... will not 'set up' and become hard, it will not discolor into the paper to which it is applied."

As a result of this glowing publicity, magic mending tapes were quickly adopted as a viable and perfectly acceptable conservation treatment by many comic book collectors and amateur comic conservators around the world. Examples of books where tape has been used to seal tears, reinforce the cover, and stabilize the spine are all attempts to preserve the current condition and prevent any further damage from occurring. These repairs were done in good faith, as people read and eagerly believed the manufacturer's claims.

Even while 3M was lauding the positive aspects of the tapes they were manufacturing, time was working its destructive nature upon the many thousands of paper collectibles to which tape had been applied. After a period of time, it became fairly apparent that the backing was indeed inert and not affected by temperature or humidity (to be expected as the backing was similar to Mylar). People soon noticed, however, that the adhesives were not aging well or uniformly.

Some tapes would dry-up, some would become brittle, some would discolor (forming an orange stain) while still others would become very sticky—seemingly regardless of the age of the tape. This difference in overall character is caused by several things, including improper storage in poor environmental conditions. Of even more concern is that the chemical composition of the adhesive would be changed by the manufacturing company in order to protect 'proprietary' information and/or copyrights.

This meant that depending on what day the tape was made—it was either going to age well with little or no long-term damage or turn orange/brown and stain everything it touched and there was absolutely no way of knowing before hand which type a person had just purchased.

In all instances, removal of the tape as soon as possible after application will decrease the amount of damage inflicted upon the comic book, as it is during the induction phase of the aging process when the chemical adhesive (regardless of composition) is easiest to treat and remove with solvents. Unfortunately, books are rarely sent for treatment until a goodly amount of time has passed... usually 20-40 years! This means that the adhesive has had a chance to age and not necessarily under optimum conditions.

Once the adhesive begins to age, it quickly changes becoming stickier and more oily. The color also changes, becoming more and more yellow. It is during this middle phase that the adhesive begins to migrate into the surface of the paper—turning it transparent. Eventually the adhesive on the surface will dry out and the carrier film will simply fall off. But the adhesive that has migrated into the paper will continue to age, cross-linking and becoming extremely brittle, hard and very yellow/brown in color. Once it has reached this final stage, removal of the adhesive and its stains is extremely difficult, if not impossible, even with the use of the most volatile solvents and the most advanced equipment.

Successful tape-removal, more often than not, is dependent on treating the adhesive before it has cross-linked to the point of insolubility combined with selecting the most suitable solvent that will remove the tape without damaging the inks or paper. Thanks to non-disclosure of the manufacturing formulas—it has become a guessing game as to which solvent(s) will work best in removing tape and its resultant stain. Unfortunately, the type of tape and the determination of which solvent to use cannot be achieved through a quick visual examination. While this method does offer some clues as to the age and extent of degradation of the adhesive, only after direct testing on the adhesive can a suitable solvent be selected, eliminating those that aren't effective.

Even then, what is known to *(Continued on page 79)*

DOES YOUR RETAILER CARRY EVERY ISSUE OF **COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE**?

IF NOT, TELL HIM YOU WANT **CBM** EVERY MONTH!

COMIC SHOP LOCATOR SERVICE
888-COMIC-BOOK
888-266-4226

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE & GEMSTONE PUBLISHING ARE PROUD SPONSORS OF THE **COMIC SHOP LOCATOR SERVICE**. CAN'T FIND A COMIC SHOP? CALL TOLL FREE **(888) COMIC BOOK**.

Visit us on the web
www.gemstonepub.com

GET CAUGHT IN THE WEB!

Gemstone Publishing's Web Site is waiting for you at
www.gemstonepub.com

Price Guides • EC Comics • Comic Book Marketplace • Overstreet's FAN Universe
News, Features, Columns & Interviews by BOB OVERSTREET • BENN RAY
JOHN K. SNYDER, JR. • ARNOLD T. BLUMBERG • J.C. VAUGHN